



PRINCIPLES OF TANTRA

PART I

THE TANTRA TATTVA OF SHRÎYUKTA ṢHIVA CHANDRA VIDYÂRNAVA BHATTÂCHÂRYYA MAHODAYA



EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY, BY

ARTHUR AVALON

LONDON
LUZAC & CO.
46, GREAT RUSSELL STREET, W.C.
(Opposite the British Museum)

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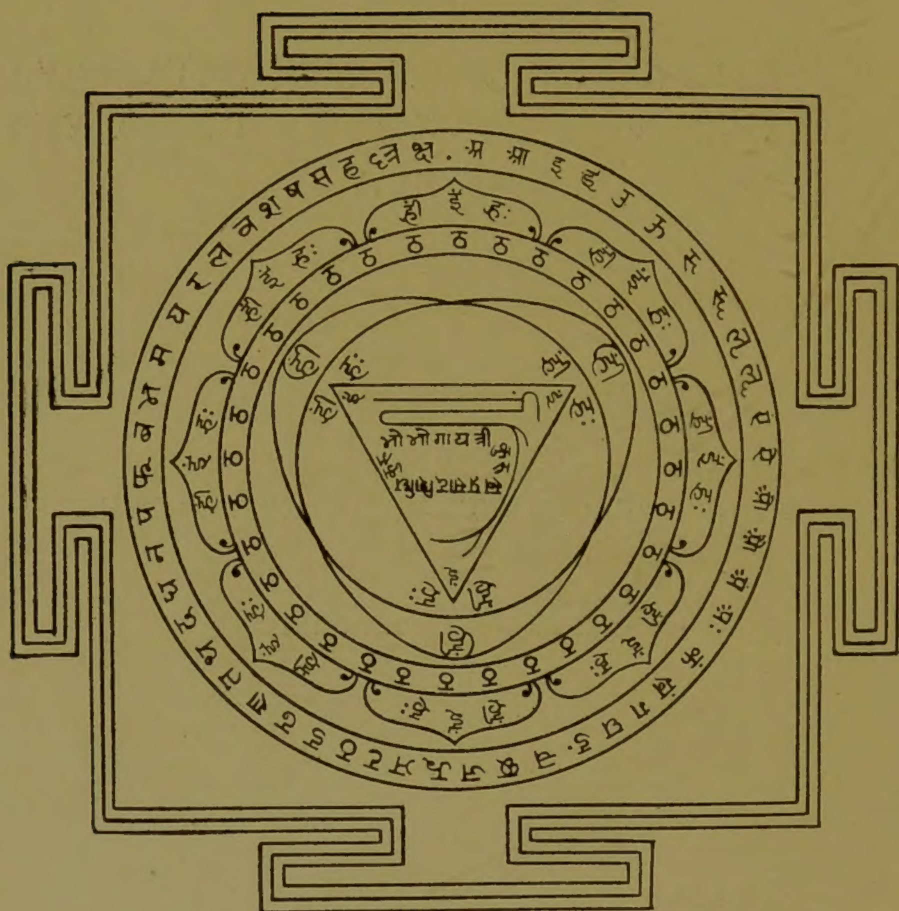
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1914



GÂYATRÎ YANTRA.

सुरार्च्चितभारतधर्म्मरक्षकवङ्गविद्वच्छिरोमणि-

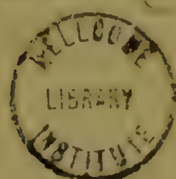
तन्त्रसागरमन्थनमन्दराचल-

श्रीयुक्तशिवचन्द्रविद्यार्णव भट्टाचार्य्यमहोदय-

श्रीचरणकमलेषु—

ग्रन्थकारस्य सप्रणाम समर्पणम् ।

A. A.


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PREFACE

MEDIÆVAL "Hinduism" (to use a convenient, if somewhat vague, term) was, as its successor, modern Indian orthodoxy, is, largely Tântrik. The Tantra was then, as it is now, the great Mantra and Sâdhana[1] Shâstra (Scripture), and the main, where not the sole, source of some of the most fundamental concepts still prevalent as regards worship, images, initiation, yoga, the supremacy of Guru, and so forth. This, however, does not mean that all the injunctions which are to be found in the Shâstra are of universal acceptance, as is pointed out in the Introduction which follows. This Introduction, however, is but a mere sketch of that which I hope to develop in a future volume after the ritual (in its widest sense) has been dealt with in detail. What is, in fact, wanted in this matter is an accurate statement of the facts; whereas up to now such cursory accounts of the Tantra as have appeared are as a rule mere general statements by way of condemnation of it.

One of the earliest of such accounts in English is contained in that interesting though biassed and, in essential respects, ill-understanding work[2] written by W. Ward, and published by the Serampore Mission in 1818. Of this book Horace Hayman Wilson wrote, in his well-known "Essays,"[3] that Ward's information was merely oral, and might be regarded as unsatisfactory.

[1] That is, ritual, practice. See Introduction to my Edition of Mahânirvâna Tantra.

[2] "A View of the History, Literature, and Mythology of the Hindus." See vol. i., pp. 496-502; vol. ii., pp. xxxviii-xli.

[3] "Essays and Lectures, chiefly on the Religion of the Hindus," Ed. 1862, vol. i., p. 258.

It is a fuller account, however, than his own, and contains a certain amount of information which is fairly accurate with some which is not so. The author, however, like so many of his English successors, was influenced by a strong racial and credal bias, which in the old style he quite frankly and honestly displayed to view. With a strong faith in Protestant Christianity he combined exaggerated notions of the universal piety and morals of his own people who professed it.[1] On the other hand, he wrote at a time when, according to his account, Hinduism was at a low ebb, and in its lower forms apparently productive of many evils. Contrasting, as some of his successors have since done, an overpainted picture of Western " Light " with a fictitious or exaggerated Eastern " Darkness," he expressed himself, as some of them have also since done, much perturbed by the fact " that for some time past a very unjust and unhappy impression appeared to have been made in the public mind by encomiums passed on the Hindu writings."[2] He was certainly not himself guilty of the offence he here deplored. For we are told by him that the " Hindu system is the most puerile, impure, and bloody of any system of idolatry that was ever established on earth " amongst " an idle, effeminate, and dissolute people " of " disordered imaginations," who " frequent their temples, not for devotion, but for the satisfaction of their licentious

[1] Comparing the virtues of his country with the general Indian iniquity, he writes: " Where shall we find piety more elevated or morals more correct even among individuals in the lowest orders of society than in our own land ?"

[2] Vol. ii., p. lxxiv. The author of a quite recent work inspired by the same motive thinks to cure the European mind, " corrupted by theosophical moonings and mystical sentimentalism," by violent and ignorant invective. " Hinduism," he writes, " is the most material and childishly superstitious animalism that has ever masqueraded as idealism." It has no morality, and the absurd object of its worship is " a mixture of Bacchus, Don Juan, and Dick Turpin." It is not a religion at all, but " is a pit of abomination, as far set from God as the mind of man can go "; and so forth. " The Light of India," by Harold Begbie.

appetites." The result of this alleged general depravity is stated in the extraordinary charge that "a chaste woman faithful to her husband is scarcely to be found in all the millions of Hindus," whose "notions of the evil of sin are so superficial" that "they cannot be expected to promulgate the doctrine" of endless punishment in Hell-fire.[1]

Given these circumstances, we are not surprised to find that he had only eyes for that which he understood to be bad. The good which is to be found in other religions is of no value to the mere controversialist. Thus, given the general brevity of his account, over lengthy descriptions are set forth of such matters as how to kill an enemy by making his image in bull's-dung, taking it to a burning-ground, then boiling the flesh of a hawk with spirits in a skull, with invocations to Antaka; charms against snake-bite, and so forth. Ward, like many another who followed him (and I deal with his case as in many respects typical of the others), seems to have thought that the chief and practically the sole subjects of the Tantra were sensual rites and black magic. It does not seem to have occurred to either him or them that, apart from its manifold secular contents, the Shâstra is the repository of a high philosophic doctrine, and of the means whereby its truth may through bodily psychic and spiritual development be realized. It is doubtless less easy to understand and describe these matters. The Scripture, however, is misjudged if we look merely to practices to be found therein similar to those contained in Western Grimoires, such as "Le Petit Albert," and other even less reputable works. A cursory glance, it is true, is thrown on higher matters, but with the same result. The lofty doctrines of Yoga, which the author of a quite recent work[2] finds to be, "with its repulsive developments" "much the same as Shamanism," was long ago

[1] See vol. ii., pp. lxxvii, xlix, xiii, xlii, xxii; vol. i., p. 499.

[2] "Antiquities of India," by Dr. L. Barnett, p. 17.

declared by his predecessor to be "absurd, impious, and ridiculous." It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the more disputable theories and ill-famed practices of some of the Tantras are not accurately described, and are indeed misunderstood. Whatever we may think of such doctrines, they are not truly represented by the statement that a certain division of worshippers seek to "blunt the edge of the passions with excessive indulgence."

The later experience of Brian Hodgson, whose valued work in Nepal should be better known, led him to describe the Tantra as "lust, mummery, and black magic."

The work of H. H. Wilson, though stated to be based in part on the texts, is admitted by its author to be necessarily superficial, depending on a cursory inspection of some of the documents.[1] The account of the Tantras occupies but a small part of a description which purports to deal with all the Hindu sects. Of these Scriptures in particular he wrote what is as true now as then, "that they had been little examined by European scholars." He added, however, that such attention as had been paid to them was enough in his opinion to warrant the accusation that "they are authorities for all that is most abominable in the present state of the Hindu religion."[2] His work is also written from the standpoint of one to whom all other systems are "shown to be fallacious and false by the Ithuriel spear of Christian truth," a standpoint which did not permit a countenance of either "devotees of superstition" on the one hand, or the men of learning on the other, "whose toleration," he complained, "is so comprehensive that it amounts to indifference to truth." The Tântrik ritual in particular is described to be "nonsensical extravagance," at which, he says, he is disposed to laugh. Nyâsas[3] are "absurd

[1] Vol. i., p. 8. [2] Vol. ii., p. 77.

[3] See as to this form of ritual Introduction to my Edition of the Mahânirvâna.

gesticulations," and so forth. H. H. Wilson was doubtless a distinguished Orientalist, and his work is in many respects of acknowledged value; but there are matters in his book which, from want of sympathy and knowledge, he wholly failed to understand, not only as regards general Hindu doctrines, but the specific teaching and ritual which is to be found in the Tantra. Nyâsa, for instance, is alleged to be absurd, but it does not appear that he or those who followed him really knew what it was, any more than he understood the nature of Vîja. We learn nothing from his definition "monosyllabic ejaculations of imagined mysterious import" beyond this—that he had nothing else to say. His observation that the Abbé Dubois committed some egregious blunders may be applied to many others who have dealt with Hinduism, including himself.[1] Indeed, if we are duly modest, we will all of us be ready to admit the possibility of going astray in what is to us both a difficult and alien subject. Thus he appears to think that the oft-quoted verse commencing with the words, "Pîtvâ, pîtvâ punah pîtvâ,"[2] is a Tântrik counsel of drunkenness as a means to secure what we call salvation. Apart from any special knowledge on the point, it might have been reasonably supposed that such an interpretation was absurd. And if it be hardly credible that a celebrated Sanskritist and intelligent man thought otherwise, this only shows that more is required for the understanding of a Hindu Shastra than linguistic talent, however great. The verse is as little understood as some others (such as "*Mâtriyonim paritajya viharet sarvvayonishu*") which, in the language of a recent

1 Vol. ii., pp. 8, 115, 82, 39, 219, 78; vol. i., p. 208.

2 "Having drunk, drunk, and again drunk, and having fallen, let him rise again and attain liberation" (vol. i., p. 260). We find apparently the same error in Ward, vol. ii., p. xl. The explanation is too long to be given here. I deal with it elsewhere. It, however, refers to the ascent and descent in the body of Kundalinî Shakti from its basic to its cerebral centre.

work,[1] are supposed to inculcate "the sacred duty to practise incest."

Since Wilson's time all who have dealt with the Tantras appear to have adopted second-hand the accounts given by him and Ward, but never, so far as I am aware, with the qualifications which Wilson thought in fairness should be added to his adverse judgment. Thus, to take but one instance, we find all authors up to the present time reproducing Wilson's erroneous statement that the Mudrâ of the Panchatattva are "mystical gesticulations," when in fact the term means parched cereal food of various kinds. The matter may appear to some a small one, even though accuracy is always important. But it is not the only instance of a repeated error; and how was it possible for those who have discoursed upon the Panchatattva of the Vîrâchâra ritual to have read the texts dealing with it, and not to have learnt what this particular Tattva means?

In the work last cited, and in a review of my Edition of the Mahânirvâna, the opinion is expressed that there is in the body of Scripture called Tantra a nucleus only of Tântrik teaching properly so called, which nucleus is defined as "black art of the crudest and filthiest kind, with a rough background of the Shiva Shakti cult." Round this nucleus, it is suggested, gathered a varying mass of Vaidik and "Brahmanic" ritual, together with a certain "quantum of Upanishadic idealism." "The Tantra" is itself said to be of two kinds. One of such classes is alleged to represent the "unvarnished" Tântrik teaching above stated. Of Scriptures representing this class it is said that they are not merely "full of silly

[1] "Antiquities of India," by Dr. L. Barnett. The verse does not mean that incest may be committed with any woman save a mother, but that in doing recitation (japa) of the Shakti Mantra count is to be made on all the joints (yoni) of the fingers, except on the two upper joints of the first (index) finger, technically in such case called the Mâtriyoni. In the case of japa of the Mantra of a male Devatâ, the two lower joints of the middle finger are called Mâtriyoni.

and vulgar superstition and magic," but have the additional "spice of wickedness and obscenity." It is of them that the author cited says: "The highly coloured Yogic imagination pales beside the doctrines of the infamous Tantras in which a veritable Devil's mass is purveyed in various forms to a swarm of sects, mostly of the Sivaite persuasion." The alleged second class of Tantras are apparently those in which the original wickedness and obscenity has been removed or rendered innocuous, or at least comparatively so, with the result that, according to the author cited, the most that can be said of them is that they are "full of silly and vulgar superstition and magic."

I cannot within the limits of this Preface discuss these strongly worded appreciations. I would, however, like to add this much to what is stated in the Introduction which follows: Allegations as regards "the Tantra"—that is, as regards the whole body of existent Scripture which passes under that name—must be received with caution. There is no European scholar who has read "the Tantra" in this sense even approximately. The reasons for this are obvious. In the first place, a great deal of the Shâstra has disappeared. Of the Tantras which survive, and which are still numerous, some are extremely rare and others are fragmentary. I have myself been endeavouring for some years past to secure MSS. of several Tantras, but without success. A few only have been printed and imperfectly edited, and even these are but little, if at all, known in Europe. The frequently erroneous character of current criticism of the Tantra leads me to suppose that its authors are, generally speaking, second-hand by report, and without a knowledge of the actual texts. If this be in some cases not so, then it would seem that only portions of some Tantras have been read, and not infrequently ill-understood. The Tantra, in fact, contains many a technical term and secret doctrine which are not to be understood by the

sole aid of a Sanskrit dictionary and grammar. When it is better known, some of the charges which have been made against it will have to be withdrawn. It has hitherto commonly been supposed that this Scripture is the expression in all its parts of all wickedness. The distinction above made, whether correct in itself or not, at least marks an advance[1] towards a more correct appreciation of the Shâstra, even though it renders the same kind of justice as that which is done when a not unintelligent man whom we have hitherto called a knave is charged with being merely a vulgar fool. It must, however, be now obvious that conclusions based on such fragmentary material, and without knowledge of the occult teachings, is without authoritative value. In the present state of our knowledge, generalizations concerning the Tantra are likely in important matters to be hazardous. They seem to me to be particularly valueless when they take the form of mere abuse.

There is another important matter which is to be borne in mind, and which one of my Indian critics thinks that I have myself overlooked in my Edition of the Mahânirvâna. He says that the account I have there given of Tântrik teaching is vitiated by the erroneous supposition that all the Tântrik works are complementary to each other, and that I have ignored the distinctions which exist between varying schools and traditions. I was not unaware of the alleged distinctions to which my critic refers, though their existence and nature have yet to be established. I, however, then expressly stated that I did not deal with these subjects, reserving as I did such observations as I had at present to make for this work. A number of questions present themselves for solution upon this difficult matter. What, for in-

[1] Not that it is the first. In more moderate language Sir Monier-Williams had already suggested a distinction between the original Tântrik teaching and its subsequent developments and between the Tantras themselves; adding, however, that little was known on the subject ("Indian Wisdom," p. 524).

stance, are the specific characteristics of the various classes of Âgamas known as Dâmara, Yâmala, Uddîsha, and Tantra, whether of the so-called Shaiva (such as the Kâmika Dîpta, Vijaya, etc.); Vaishnava (such as the Gandharva, Gautama, Râdhâ, Brihadrudrayâmala, and others); or the Shâkta, Kaula, or Devî type of Tantra? A similar question may be raised as to the sixty-four Tantras of the three Krântas respectively. Again, what are the Tantras in force in the present Svetavarâha Kalpa? Again, what is the relation between all these Shâstras as representing the specifically "Indian" Tantra and the "Buddhist" Tantra? Finally, what, if any, are the developments which have taken place as regards these Shâstric teachings? For Indian thought moves, even though some who write of it from books only think of it as something merely past. As H. H. Wilson says of the Hindu religion generally: "Its internal constitution has not been exempt from those varieties to which all human systems of belief are subject, and it has undergone great and frequent modifications, until it presents an appearance which there is great reason to suppose is very different from that which it originally wore." Lastly, what (and this is my immediate subject) is the Tântrik doctrine and practice as it is at present understood and followed? When these and a number of other questions of great difficulty are solved, we may permit ourselves a greater dogmatism than our present state of knowledge allows. I am more immediately concerned with another matter—namely, the present beliefs of the Indian peoples. In connection, however, with this purpose, I may here say this: if it is assumed that there are different schools, then Tantras of the same school may obviously be taken as complementary to one another. In respect of other Tantras, even if they do, as alleged, represent varying traditions, it will, I think, be found that there are in any case many common elements accompanying their own alleged distinctive

differences which render them complementary to other Tantras to that extent. Take, for instance, the specific Tântrik Yoga, known as Shatchakrabheda, which involves concentration on the lower centres. This is dealt with in Tantras which are alleged to be the expression of differing doctrine and practice in other respects. Similar observations may be made as regards the general worship (Upâsanâ), and so forth.

As the foregoing observations may possibly be misunderstood by some to mean that I think that there is nothing in the Tantra which is likely to provoke dissent, and that nothing has been done in the name, or by followers, of the Shâstra, which is in fact evil, it is necessary for me to say that that is not my opinion, though I think that the Shâstra as a whole has not hitherto been understood—a fate which it has shared with many another Hindu doctrine and practice.

Looking at the matter from a purely objective standpoint, every Orientalist must admit that an accurate knowledge of this Shâstra is of first-rate importance. But apart from this historical view, there are in the Tantra principles and practices which are of value in themselves. There is, for instance, a deep philosophic doctrine and a wonderful ritual which artistically shares with the Buddhist Tantras, though in a different way, the vehement splendour which has aptly been ascribed to the latter; a ritual which is at the same time, when rightly understood, singularly rational and psychologically profound. One of my English critics aptly appreciated this character of the Tântrik ritual when he said that "from one point of view it is perhaps the most elaborate system of auto-suggestion in the world;"[1] a remark which, as well as the theory of auto-suggestion itself, will have a deeper content for those who are conversant with the Indian doctrine of the Âtman and states of consciousness than for the ordinary English reader. It is necessary,

[1] *The Quest*, October, 1913.

however, that the ritual should be understood, otherwise it will not unlikely appear to be the "nonsensical extravagance" which H. H. Wilson called it. Disdain for "meaningless mystical syllables," "absurd gesticulations," and so forth, is often, after all, nothing but the rather foolish expression of annoyance which is felt at the presence of something not understood. These things, however, are not so senseless as some suppose.

In the next place we have in the Tantra the recognition of the fine principle that this doctrine and its expression in ritual are (subject to their varying competencies) for all, whatever be their race, caste, or sex. This marks a great advance on the parochial restrictions of the Vedas, which are so often placed in favourable opposition to the Tantra by English writers. The Shudra and woman are under none of the Vaidik bans. What, again, can be finer than the high veneration of woman which the Tantra inculcates. The Sufi author of the Dabistan,[1] describing, in the seventeenth century, the Shâktas, speaks of the Mother of the World in the following charmful passage:[2] "This Mâyâ is the maker of the productions of this world and of its inhabitants, and the Creator of the spirits and of the bodies: the universe and its contents are born from Her: from respect of the said production; and of the mentioned effects She is entitled Jagadambâ, or Mother of the Universe. Nonentity finds no access to this Creator. The garment of perishableness does not sit right upon the body of this fascinating Empress. The dust of nothingness does not move round the circle of Her dominion. The real beings of heaven and the accidental creatures of the nether world are equally enamoured and intoxicated of desire before Her. Bound by these ties of deceit in this revolving world, whoever rebels feels the desire of Mukti—that is, of emancipation, independence, and happiness; nevertheless, from carelessness, he pays obedience and worship to this world-

[1] Ed. Shea and Troyer (1843).

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 149.

deceiving Queen, and never abandons the path of adoration of this bewitching Lady who, as the spiritual principle, exists in all living beings in the Six Circles." As women are the earthly incarnations of this great Queen he goes on then to say: " The Âgama (Tantra) favours both sexes equally, and makes no distinction between women, for men and women compose equally humankind. This sect hold women in great esteem and call them Shaktis (powers), and to ill-treat a Shakti—that is, a woman—is held to be a crime." As H. H. Wilson also himself points out,[1] women, as manifestations of the Great Cause of all, are entitled to respect and even to veneration. Whoever offends them incurs the wrath of Prakriti, the Mother of all, whilst he who propitiates them offers worship to Prakriti Herself.[2]

And so, at a time when, as some allege, in accordance with the Vedas,[3] the rite of Satî was being practised, and many a woman was being horribly oppressed, it was the Mahânirvâna Tantra[4] which forbade it on the grounds above stated. In conformity, also, with these views we find that, according to the Tantra, alone of the great Shâstras, a woman may be a spiritual teacher (Guru), and initiation by her achieves increased benefit. Thus initiation by a mother of her son is eightfold more fruitful than any other. This, some may think, is not without example to us in the West, where, notwithstanding the increasing recognition of the place of woman, her right of spiritual teaching is still denied. There are other matters in the Tantra to which in this connection I might refer, such as the true principles of Sâdhana on the path of desire, were it not impossible to discuss such a subject shortly except at peril of misunderstanding.

1 " Essays," vol. i., p. 246.

2 Even if it be held, as Wilson does, that this doctrine has led with one branch of the sect at least to abuse, the existence of such abuse cannot affect the doctrine itself as above described.

3 The existence of Vaidik authority is disputed.

4 See Introduction, *post*.

Whatever we may think upon these matters, it will occur to everyone of experience and free from prejudice that there must be more in a Shâstra which has obtained so great a credence and wide-spreading authority than the moral abuses and silly superstitions alone with which it is charged. From the purely objective and detached standpoint of the historical student, the whole of the Shâstra is of value and interest. Historical research in itself is not concerned with moral values. Its subject is whatever man has taught, or said, or done. When we consider, however, these values, the case is, of course, different. From the latter point of view, the Tantra is an encyclopedic amalgam of elements of varying character and worth, extending from the doctrines of a lofty speculation to practices which to the higher occultism are suspect,[1] and to prescriptions which may be used for the purposes of evil-intentioned magic. Here, therefore, we must distinguish. In short, we must first inquire and learn what, in fact, the Shâstra is, and then understand and discriminate.

Up to the present, however, want of knowledge is responsible for an indiscriminating condemnation of the whole of an extensive literature, the cultural expression of the varied activities of a secular epoch. It is sufficient at present for practical purposes to say that (apart from magic) the ritual in the Shâstra to which objection has been taken forms but one portion of the Scripture properly applicable to a select class of adepts, and that the remainder of its provisions deal with matters which are free from exception on the grounds on which the Tantra has been adversely criticized. It is unnecessary here to further develop a proposition of which the book now translated is itself the proof.

[1] I have here in mind what is technically called Nil Sâdhana, and express myself as I do remembering that some great Sâdhakas have practised it. It is noteworthy that both it and Mahâchinâchâra (a term in itself full of significance) are the two chief elements in the Indian Tantra which are alleged to be non-Aryan importations.

I had at first intended merely to draw upon the author's work and other sources for the purpose of a presentation in Western form of some of the fundamental principles of a Ṣhâstra which has been hitherto so little understood. The execution of this intention I defer to some future time, when I hope to deal in my own way with the metaphysical and psychological bases of Hindu worship, a subject, on its practical side, hitherto untouched. For the present, however, I present the subject in the words of an orthodox Hindu, who is an adherent of the Tantra Ṣhâstra, and whose work (Tantratattva) is here translated.[1] For those who might be disposed to accept the correctness of the views expressed by the Authors above cited would not unlikely entertain a suspicion of the genuineness of the Tântrik character of a work of the present description, if upon a reading they should find it to be neither silly, nor vulgarly superstitious, magical, wicked, or obscene. The exposition, therefore, here given is not mine, but the Pandit's.

His work is, however, in no sense complete, but deals in a popular style with some portions only of the subject-matter. After I had written the Introduction which follows, I received a letter from him in which he explains that his book was published over twenty years ago, with a view to combating both the errors of what is called " Reformed " or " Protestant " Hinduism, and the mistakes of some incompetent defenders of orthodoxy; and that therefore both the matter and form of his work were determined by the arguments of those whom he controverted. As a result, his reply, which is presented in a somewhat discursive manner, does not treat of some subjects with which he desired to deal. He writes, therefore, to me to say that he has in preparation a third part, in which he proposes to give an exposition of the philosophy of the Tantra. The two Parts, now and to

[1] The work and its author are referred to in the Introduction which follows.

be shortly published, treat of (to use our parlance) the religious side of *certain portions* of the subject, though in India philosophy and religion are mingled in a way which the West has not known since the age when philosophy was held to be Ancilla Theologiæ. This third Part, when ready, I hope to publish in continuation of the volume now issued.

Further, there are certain matters of doctrine and practice which are, as the Author states, for the initiate alone, and of which, therefore, he treats either cursorily or not at all. What, however, he does say will effect more than a mere acquittal of his system of the wholesale charges of absurdity and vice so commonly made against it. Referring to what is blameworthy, the Pandit himself says: " We know that there are reasons for saying some hard things "; though he adds: " But how are Kâlî or Shiva or Tantra to blame ?" As regards the likelihood of abuse in any system, there is more to be said for the Hindu view of the naturally crooked influence of time than for the notion of " progress " from moment to moment which some of us in the West would seem to entertain. But for all that, it would indeed be a phenomenon of strange degeneracy if India, which has thought the deepest thoughts of the world, and which has been marked by the intensity of its religious feelings, should, even in its most unfortunate days, have produced a system of extensive influence and authority which is intellectually nothing but " brainless hocus-pocus," and morally a mere facile reversal of the high notions of Dharma,[1] which have distinguished its peoples beyond all the races. As a matter of fact, and to my knowledge, even at the present day some of the most learned Pandits and the greatest Sâdhakas esteem and follow this Scripture, which they regard as the treasure of their heart. How comes this to be if it is merely, as alleged, the debased product of the Hindu spirit " at its lowest and very

[1] Religion, duty, etc. See Introduction, Mahânirvâna Tantra.

worst"? Whether particular portions of its teachings or practice should be generally approved is another matter. The difficulties, however, which attend an exposition of even such parts of the Shâstra as seem to be at first view readily exposed to attack are such that those who have any real knowledge concerning them will be the first to abstain from hasty generalizations, particularly when they take the form of mere abuse.

As regards such portions of doctrine as are here exposed, the Author in the course of the defence of his own beliefs has in many an instance severely castigated his opponents for their inaccurate statements and loose thinking. For reasons, however, which I give in the Introduction which follows, views more favourable to the Author's position now more generally prevail in India than was the case when his work was first written. Many even of those who nowadays are not prepared to accept orthodox doctrine in its entirety are yet disposed to think that the beliefs of their fathers were not, after all, quite so foolish as under the first influences of the English "Illumination" they considered them to be. But this change of view is not peculiar to India only. We ourselves have also recently experienced something of the same kind. An intelligent understanding of Christian ideas and Catholic ritual has dispelled many a shallow criticism to which they have been subjected by a narrow sectarianism on the one hand, and an equally narrow "rationalism" on the other. By this, however, it is not meant that no adverse criticisms in either of these matters have had force, or that in some Indian quarters the Shâstra is not still regarded as (to use the words of an Indian writer) "mines of superstition."

Though the Pandit's work is issued in two parts, I have, for the benefit of the readers of the first volume, given the table of contents of the second part now in the press, which will be ready for publication this year.

This will be preceded by an Introductory essay from the pen of Sj. Baroda Kanta Majumdâr.

Later I hope to make up for the deficiencies in the present work by others dealing with the ritual in greater detail. Thus the Pandit in the second part refers to, but does not treat of, the Tantrik yoga process, known as Shatchakrabheda. This I have dealt with in the work now in the press, entitled "The Six Centres and the Serpent Force," being a translation from the Sanskrit, with Introduction, commentary, and plates of the Shatchakranirûpana of Purnânanda Svâmî, the Sanskrit treatise itself forming part of the extensive Shrîtattvachintâmani, which is also being prepared for publication in the series of "Tântrik Texts."

The references to the "Introduction" are to the Introduction of my Edition of the Mahânirvâna Tantra. References to "Introduction, *ante*," are to the Introduction which follows this Preface.

ARTHUR AVALON.

BENARES,
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INTRODUCTION

THIS work, by an Indian Pandit, is a presentment, the first of its kind, of the principles of that development of the Vaidika Karmakânda which, under the name of the Tantra Shâstra, is the scripture (Shâstra) of the Kali age. This Shâstra, together with its accompanying oral tradition, is the voluminous source of the greater part of the Hindu ritual, Hathayoga, and the various forms of spiritual training which pass under the generic term "Sâdhana." In fact, both popular and esoteric Hinduism is, in its practical aspects, largely Tântrik.

Recently an increased interest has been shown in the Hindu beliefs. Hitherto, however, attention has been chiefly directed to those great Vedântik principles, which, subsumed, to a greater or less degree, in the beliefs and practices of all the Hindu sects are yet, in their conscious realization, the very end only of the highest spiritual effort. Little has been done to present the practical application of those principles in the particular form which they assume in the various divisions, methods, and rituals of the Indian worshippers. This side of practice, though neglected, has both intrinsic value and helps to a clearer and deeper understanding of the general principles than can be gathered from any bare theoretical statement of them. Ritual and spiritual exercise are objectively considered their pictorial statement, as they are subjectively the effective means of their realization. The knowledge of hymn, and legend, of worship and sâdhana, will alone give that full knowledge of the Hindu spirit without which its religious and philosophical conceptions are likely to be but poorly understood. The present development of upâsana (worship) and sâdhana

can only be learnt from the Tantra, which is the Mantra and Sâdhana Shâstra and its accompanying oral traditions.

"Some years ago," Professor Cowell wrote, "the Tantras form a branch of literature highly esteemed, though at present much neglected"; yet, as Professor Sir Monier Williams[1] has more recently pointed out, none of the numerous Tantras had, when he wrote,[2] been printed in Europe or investigated or translated by its Orientalists.

The account, which the work last cited gives of them, itself affords, by its meagre character and inaccuracies, evidence of the lack of information on the subject of which its author speaks. Thus the mudrâ of the Panchatattva does not, as there stated, mean "mystical gestures," but, in the case of the râjasika and tâmasika panchatattva, parched cereal of various kinds as defined by the Yoginî Tantra.[3] In the sâttvika sâdhana it has another and esoteric meaning,[4] equally dissimilar from the sense of the term "mudrâ" as that word is employed in ordinary upâsana and hathayoga. "Nigama" is not the name of a "sacred book appealed to by Dakshinâchârins" as opposed to "Âgama," but is that form of Tantra in which the Devî is guru instead of shishya, as opposed to "Âgama," in which the Devî is shishya and Shiva is guru.[5] It follows, therefore, that Âgama does

[1] "Indian Wisdom," p. 522 *et seq.*

[2] I have since published an English translation of the current Sanskrit version of the Mahânirvâna Tantra, and have in preparation a translation of the Kulârnava.

[3] Chap. vi.:

Bhrishtadânyâdikang yad yad charvaniyang prachakshate,
Sâ mudrâ kathitâ devi sarveshâng naganandini.

The same and other errors occur in Encyc. Brit., xiii., pp. 511-512.

[4] See Âgamasâra; Kaivalya Tantra, and the Tantra *passim*, and Introduction to my edition of Mahânirvâna Tantra.

[5] See the Âgamâdvaitanirnaya, cited *post*. On the contrary, the Nigamas are said to be Pûrnarahasya. Âgama and Nigama are also applied to the Veda, but Âgama as applied to the Tantra has the above signification, though, as Professor Whitney says, it etymologically means "that which has come down" (Century Dictionary and Cyclopædia, vol. ix., p. 978).

not mean "a sacred book appealed to by Vâmâchârins" as opposed to Nigama of the followers of Dakshinâchâra. Nor is the term Vâmâchârin itself a synonym for Kaula, for a person may be the first without being the second.[1] The Mahânirvâna Tantra is not the only Tantra "attributed to Shiva," but all Shâstra so called has Him as its Revealer and Ganesha as its scribe.[2] The Sâradâtilaka and Mantramahodadhi are not Tantras, but Tantrik compendia and commentaries. The Tântrik rite called Bhûtashuddhi does not mean "removal of demons,"[3] but the purification of the elements (earth, air, fire, etc., and the tattvas of which they are derivatives) in the body of the sâdhaka, and so forth.

As might be expected, errors abound in accounts given by authors claiming less expert competence, whether European or Indian. Thus an Indian writer[4] explains the Mudrâ of the Panchatattva to be "gold or coins." It is true that "coin" is one of the meanings of the term "Mudrâ," but even in the absence of special information it might have reasonably been surmised that "Tântriks" do not worship with a gold mohur or rupee. Nor is the Shakti, which is by these and other rites worshipped, material force, as was supposed by the founder of the Bhâratavarshîya Brahmasamâj, who wrote some years ago of the

[1] The Kaula is a member of the highest of the several divisions of worshippers (Âchâra), of which Vâmâchâra is one. It is only after a Sâdhaka has fulfilled all preceding Dharmas that he is qualified for Kauladharma.

[2] See Gâyatrî Tantra, chap. i. Professor Whitney (*loc. cit.*) says that their authorship is sometimes ascribed to Dattâtreya. Of this I have never heard, and if such ascription is made it is incorrect: There is a work dealing with Indrajâla Vidyâ called the Dattâtreya Tantra, as also a Yâmala of the same name, and Dattâtreya is a Rishi said to be particularly revered by the Nakulâvadhûta Sect. The Tantras generally were, as stated in the text, revealed by Shiva.

[3] See same author's (Monier Williams), Sanskrit Dictionary, sub voce "bhuta," where also are given some inaccurate definitions of the Shatchakra.

[4] "Country and Temple of Kâmâkhyâ," *Calcutta Review*, October, 1911.

European materialists of his day as "Shâktas offering dry homage to force victorious over the European Bhaktas worshippers of the God of Love."[1] Nor is it the fact "that Shâktas divide themselves into the Dâkshina and Vâma classes according to whether they attach the greater importance to the male or to the female principle respectively"[2] and so forth. Misconception of the teaching of Tantra, together with abuses committed by one of the communities of Tântrik worshippers, led a Bengali apologist of the Shâstra, when writing some twenty years ago on the subject of Tantra, to say:[3] "Unfortunately, however, their intentions have been so grossly misrepresented in our days that the very name of Tantra shocks our nerves; yet two-thirds of our religious rites are Tântrik, and almost half our medicine is Tântrik."

The causes of this neglect of the Shâstra in the country of its origin and in the West are several. Their consideration will also explain the standpoint from which this book here translated is written. In the first place, in the case of India, must be reckoned the effects of English education. This, when first introduced, not merely struck at faith in all Indian Shâstra, but was in a particular manner adverse to that form of it which was then current, and with which we here deal. Tântrik Hinduism is, in its more common aspect, essentially of a sacramental and ritualistic character. Those who first introduced and gave English education were for the most part Protestants, with no sympathy with, or understanding of, a mode of religious thought and practice which to a considerable extent, both in its inner spirit

[1] "The New Dispensation," pp. 108, 109. Nor, it may be here noted, is it correct to say that Tântriks believe the universe to have been developed by the inherent power of matter, as stated in the "Cyclopædia of India," vol. v., p. 72. Nor is it correct to speak, as H. H. Wilson did ("Essays," p. 241), of the "worship of the female principle as distinct from the Divinity."

[2] "The Soul of India," by G. Howells, p. 320.

[3] "Lectures on the Hindu Religion," by K. Chakravarti (1893), itself an inaccurate, though well-intentioned, little book.

and outward forms, bore resemblance to that which in Europe Protestantism, in its various sects, had arisen to oppose. Their general attitude is illustrated by a passage in a recent work[1] (containing a singularly ignorant and unjust estimate of Hinduism), in which the author says that, when standing before a Buddhist shrine, he felt as if he was before that of St. Carlo Borromeo at Milan, adding: "But the chief feeling that one had was of the extraordinary close similarity of Latin Christianity and Pre-christian Buddhism—the feeling and sensation of the *same immemorial superstition* persisting through the forms and ritual of two religions so diametrically opposed." As this matter presented itself to the English teachers, so it did to the Indian students, who (to use a Bengali expression) "held their tail." This the latter did the more readily both because of the abuses for which some of the followers of the Shâstra were responsible and of the unintelligent and mechanical formalism of the worship of others. To the Hindu so educated the Tantra was in all its parts as much superstitious "mummery" as it was to his English teachers. This education did not, however, from the religious point of view, bear the results which were expected of it. For while many Hindus were led through such teaching to reject their ancestral belief, but few were found who were willing to accept the form of faith which was offered to them as its substitute. Possibly to some extent different results might have been achieved had there been more points of contact between the two faiths, for these might have served both to guard the common religious sentiment and to afford some sort of foundation upon which a Christian structure might have been raised. Such had been the thought, in earlier times, of Jesuit missionaries both in India and China. Many of the Hindus whose faith had been unduly disturbed commenced (so far as Indians can—a matter for them of fortunate difficulty) to question the validity of the religious sense itself. A period of scepticism then

1 "The Light of Asia," by Harold Begbie, p. 148.

followed, which, of course, has not wholly passed away in India any more than it will wholly pass away elsewhere.

Theories stale in the West, but new in the East, were adopted by some with the same indiscriminating fervour as were the discarded fashions of English "art" and articles of commerce. Some there were who, judging all things by a narrow test of "utilitarian" principle, found every historic religion, whether of East or West, to be the outcome merely of the deceit of priests, whose "highest achievement" in all lands has been "abomination worship." And of this in India[1] the Shâkta and other cults were cited as the worst examples.[2]

The use of this strong language applied to all the religions of East and West suggests the observation that, while grounds for adverse judgment may have existed, we must examine the criticisms by Hindus of the beliefs of their countrymen as we would any other, in order to see whether the author knows that of which he speaks, and, if so, whether he is free (which the author cited was not) from prejudice against "religion" in general, or the sectarianism which exists in India, as elsewhere.[3] Nor is the language used in such cases to be always taken literally. If, for instance, we can imagine the astonished mind of an otherwise uninformed Hindu, after the perusal of the stanza of the "Orange" hymn cited below,[4] it is not improbable to suppose that a too literal understanding of

[1] As regards the West, the author of the work cited is of opinon that the system of auricular confession made further priestly efforts in the direction of "abomination worship" supererogatory.

[2] "Hindu Castes and Sects," by J. N. Bhattâchârji. I cite this apparently nâstika work as one of a type only, it being fairly well known and read. The author writes down even the Buddha as an ambitious schemer.

[3] Particular animosity used to exist, and amongst the sectarian-minded still exists, between Shâktas and Vaishnavas.

[4] "Scarlet Church of all uncleanness,
Sink thou to the deep abyss,
To the orgies of obsceneness,
Where the Hell-bound Furies hiss,
Where thy father's Satan's eye
Hails thee, hellish Popery."

its words might give him notions as to the "obscenity" of the tenets and practice of the Catholic Church which would appear exaggerated even to the inflamed judgment of the author of the "hymn" in question.

In the West this raw philosophizing has for some time past been appreciated at its true value. More mature views will find a deeper source for the religious instinct than the machinations (even though they exist) of priests.

The following passage from another writer,[1] purporting to give the verdict of "New India on Religion," is, in its blustering crudities, reminiscent of our own cheap rationalism of the second half of the last century:

"The world is passing from faith to reason. The future is for reason. When reason is established the problem of the world will be easy of solution. Reason will stand no miracles, no humbug, no special incarnations or exclusive revelations. It will elbow out all creeds, and admit nothing which cannot be demonstrated to the intelligence. Forms of worship are excrescences of religion. Belief in the supernatural and transcendent is getting into a discount. The element of mystery once believed to be an inseparable factor of religion is disappearing," and so forth.

They are but weakly met by such mawkish presentments of the "Religion of the Future" as those of which the following passage is a vaguely-conceived and worded, however well-intentioned, example:—"No priest can lead us by the nose and make us believe in meaningless practices which profit no one but the professional priest![2] Free thought will be the watchword of the churches of the future. Religion will be a real being, becoming. Growing in life from within like an endogen; drawing sustenance also from without. Religion is to be in tune with the infinite. It will be the budding forth

[1] The *Indian World*, July, 1910.

[2] This and the rest of the quotation are, of course, inspired by a type of Western thought. To the Hindu mantra is not mere akshara, nor guru a mere man, but the manifestation of the Supreme and only Guru, the Âdinâtha Mahâkâla. The revolt, however, is supported to some extent by the fact of the incompetence of many of the gurus.

of the lotus of the heart; the correspondence with the environments of the soul; the opening out of the fountains from within; the setting aflow of the waters of life proceeding from the throne of the Most High. Religion will not be a theorem, a Q.E.D., but a problem, Q.E.F."[1]

A more definite attempt to reconcile religious tradition and "modern thought" was made by the Brâhmasamâj, the doctrines of which, as also of the Secularist school, are combated in this book. The Âdisamâj, which preceded it, more closely adhered to orthodox Hinduism, being distinguished from the latter by the rejection of some of its beliefs and practices. In the Brâhmasamâj the doctrines became of a more syncretistic character. There was a further divergence from orthodoxy, and an attempt was made to incorporate alien forms of thought and ritual. The Brâhmasamâj describes itself in the words of one of its prominent supporters as "a humble gleaner of the truth wherever found." The resulting eclecticism possesses its share of the weaknesses of all such systems.

All these influences, the outcome of English education—whether they be of the Secularist type, abandoning all ancient forms of beliefs, or of that which claims to reform but as often destroys them, or of the more modern kind which seeks a belief which shall be freed of form—led away from the standpoint of orthodox form, which is that of the Tantra. The process was accelerated by the decadence of many of the followers of the Vâmâchâra community governed by the Shâstra.

In the general neglect of Shâstra, and repulsion caused by abuse, no attempt was made to ascertain what in fact were the true teachings of that portion of it which governed this community. No distinction was made between such doctrine and the abuses of it, nor between the particular portion of the Shâstra prescribing and regulating Vâmâchâra ritual and those other portions

1 "The Religion of the Future," by Hemendra Nath Sinha, B.A., pp. 38, 39. The last sentence is like the rest obscure, but perhaps indicates the workings of the pragmatic bacillus even in the East.

which governed other divisions of Sâdhakas or the community in general. The Shâstra was, generally in its entirety, condemned as useless where it was not considered morally harmful. To some extent these conclusions may have influenced European Orientalists, but probably in much less degree; for scientific investigation of human activities in whatsoever sphere is not (without closure of all historical inquiry) to be thwarted by the fear that what may be found on investigation is not that which is likely to be approved. Nor are the difficulties of a linguistic character, the Tantras being written in comparatively simple Sanskrit. The reason is rather to be found in difficulties of a different kind.

The Tantra in some of its aspects is a secret doctrine (guptavidyâ) to be gathered, not from the written record, but verbally from those who hold the key to it. So with Eastern allegory it is said: "Verily, verily, and without a doubt the Veda Shâstra and Purânas are, like a common woman, free to all, but the doctrine of Shambhu (*i.e.*, the Tantra) is like a secret house bride, to reveal which is death."[1] The key to the method has been with the initiate.

Next there are two special difficulties as regards the record; firstly, its fragmentary character and its existence in manuscripts which are not easily procurable, and then the technical character of the terminology. Next, the ritualistic character of the Tantra requires as a preliminary for its exposition at least some general knowledge regarding the subject, which does not ordinarily exist except among Hindus. In the case of certain Tântrik doctrines and practices, the more ordinary difficulties have been increased owing to the complex and esoteric character of the rituals, and, as some allege, to

[1] Vedashâstrapurânâni sâmânyaganikâ iva
Yâ punah shâmbhavî vidyâ guptâ kulabadhûriva
Prakâshe prânahânih syât satyang satyang na sangshayah.

So also the Tantrasâra (Ed. R. M. Chatterji), p. 691, which says: "Kadâchiddehahânistu na châgupti kadâchana, varam pûjâ na karttavyâ na cha vyaktih kadâchana."

the existence of higher and lower traditions (âmnâya), which to-day have become confused. Lastly, while the Shâstra provides by its various âchâras for all types, from the lowest to the most advanced, its essential concepts, under whatever aspects they are manifested, and into whatever pattern they are woven, are (as Professor de la Vallée Poussin says of the Buddhist Tantra) of a metaphysical and subtle character. This is particularly so as regards Shaktitattva, Mantratattva, and Yogatattva, though there are others. It is claimed that the true Tântrikâchâryya is the master of Veda, and that its esoteric teaching can only be fully understood from the Shâstra and its accompanying traditions, and the personal experiences which are the practical fruits of its Sâdhana.

Since this work was first published the so-called "progressive" movement has been followed by a reaction in the orthodox Hindu world, which is not without its own defects.[1] The spread of Theosophical ideas first renewed an interest in the teachings of India's great past, and an awakening national spirit has done the rest. The Tantra has had a share in this interest as is manifested in the fair number of Tantras, Tântrik compendia such as the Prânatoshinî,[2] and other works on the Shâstra (of which that now translated is one), which have been first published or reprinted in recent years. It is a sign of the times to find even a Brâhma publication on the Shatchakra.[3] This interest

[1] To those, for instance, whose supposed "Hindu" sentiment would revive the practice of Sati may be recommended the words of the Mahânirvâna Tantra: "O Kuleshâni, a wife should *not* be burnt with her dead husband. *Every woman is thy image.* Thou residest concealed in the forms of all women in this world (tava svârûpâ ramani jagatyâchchhannavigrahâ). That woman who in her delusion (moha) ascends the funeral pyre of her lord *shall go to hell*" (chap. x., verses 79-80).

[2] From the same source comes the Prânakrishnashabdâmbuddhi, which I hope to publish.

[3] Gâyatrimûlaka shatchakrervyâkhyâna o sâdhanâ, a publication by the Mangala Ganga Mission Press.

is due in part to the general religious revival in progress, and also to the increasing recognition of the necessity of sâdhana (practice), as distinct from mere philosophizing, if any practical result is to be attained.

According to orthodox views, the Tantra will continue in force until the close of the Kaliyuga, when the golden age (Satya yuga) will reappear, governed by its appropriate Shâstra. The India of to-day is, however, not in the same sense as of yore the "Shrî Bhârata, adored of the Devas" (Surârchitabhârata), to which the book now published makes salutation.

The author has many a lament over the changes occurring in what appears to him to be a darkening time. "If to-day all men had the strength of faith of Kâmadeva Târkika, hero must powerful in the field of austerity, or of Ganesha Upâdhyâya, whose life was one long surrender to the Mother; or of Râmaprasâda,[1] who was, as it were, a bee intoxicated with the honey of the lotus feet of Ṣhakti,[2] should we in that case have had to sing in Tantra Tattva[3] the song of all these evil designs (against the Ṣhâstra). But the day is now lost to us. That unflinching faith in Tantra, the Sâdhana-Ṣhâstra, has been shaken."[4]

"Alas! the lion-hearted heroes, pillars of Sanâtana Dharma! where are you to-day in this dismal time? That resplendent lustre of yours hallowed by Sâdhana, is mingled with the Mantra Ṣhâstra itself. Do ye to-day shed that lustre in every letter, in every accent. Let the Ṣhâstra of Bhârata be again resplendent with the fire of the Tapas[5] of Bhârata's sons."[6]

[1] The celebrated Bengali poet and Ṣhâkta.

[2] Ṣhakti is Devî—that is, both the power of God and God Himself. Each of the Devas has His Ṣhakti or power worshipped under the form of His spouse.

[3] This book.

[4] "Principles of Tantra," p. 25.

[5] Austerities, etc. (see Introduction).

[6] "Principles of Tantra," p. 65.

But his cause is not wholly lost to him, and he continues to defend it—with a certain spacious splendour of imagery and feeling which belong to a passing world.

"Reasoning, argument and inference may be the work of other Shâstras, but the work of Tantra is to accomplish superhuman and divine[1] events by the force of its own Mantras. Destruction, driving away, and establishment of control,[2] and such other powers, are still to be daily seen. Hundreds of thousands of great and accomplished Sâdhakas still illumine all India with the glory of their austerities.[3] In every cremation ground[4] in India the refulgent and divine halo of Bhairavas and Bhairavîs[5] is yet to be seen mingling with the light of the flames of funeral pyres, rending apart the waves of nocturnal darkness and illuminating the wide expanse of Heaven. Dead and putrefying corpses submerged[6] near cremation grounds are still brought to life by the force of the Sâdhakas' Mantras, and made to render aid to Sâdhana and Siddhi. Whilst still living in this mortal world Tântrik Yogîs even now obtain, through the potency of Mantras, direct vision of the supersensual activities of the world of Devas. She, with dishevelled hair, the dispeller of fear from the hearts of Her devotees, still appears in great cremation grounds,[7] to give liberation to Her devoted Sâdhakas who, made afraid by the fear of this existence, make obeisance to and supplicate Her. Sâdhakas still merge themselves in the Self of Brahman

1 Daiva.

2 Mâraṇam, Uchchâtanam, Vaṣhîkaraṇam.

3 Tapas.

4 Smashâna, where Ṣhavâsana, Muṇḍâsana, Latâsâdhana and other Tântrik rites, are practised.

5 Adept Tântrik men and women.

6 Before and whilst awaiting burning, the corpse is placed in the sacred stream.

7 Mahâsmaṣhânas, where some of the most difficult forms of Tântrik Sâdhanâ are practised. The auspicious Kâlikâ is thought of as with dishevelled hair (vigalitachikurâ), and so is the hair of the devotee (see Karpurâdi stotra, verses 3, 10).

by laying their Brahmarandhra[1] at those lotus feet of Brahmamayî,[2] which are adored by Brahmâ and other Devas. The throne of the Daughter of the Mountain[3] is still moved by the wondrous, attractive force of Mantras. This, in the eyes of Sâdhakas, is the ever broad and royal road upon which they travel untiring to the city of liberation."[4]

The same forces, however, against which this book, as also other orthodoxies, protest, are in conflict both with Hinduism in its present Tântrik form and with Christianity of the older type. In the present mingling of East and West, each is providing a ferment for the other, which, when all is said, is as much a divine product as the Revelations which it sometimes appears to threaten. The embodied Âtmâ, however, *must* ever seek itself, revealing its search to us in that which we call the "religious spirit," clothed though It must also be in forms new or renewed[5]—its changing expression in a world of unceasing change.

* * * * *

For the understanding of the Tântrik, or, indeed, any other beliefs and practices, the usual dry-as-dust investigation of the savant is insufficient. In the first place a call should be made upon actual present experience. The primary inquiry should be addressed to the ascertainment of the present belief and practice of those whose religious history is under investigation. It is obvious that the course of time effects changes. But whatever these may be, present beliefs are the descendants of those of the past. Much, therefore, which was in the parent will be found in the child. A study of the present will help to an understanding of ancient documents which,

[1] The cavity of Brahman at the top of the head, here used for the head generally.

[2] The Devî.

[3] The Devî as daughter of Himavat.

[4] "Principles of Tantra," pp. 127, 128, and see pp. 291, 292.

[5] Hinduism is already taking on a new life.

if made the sole basis of research, often prove the source of error. For these reasons I have selected a modern exposition of the general basis of Tântrik doctrine by one who, as its adherent, has inherited its traditions (vaktrâdvaktrena). We are now recommencing to value tradition, which everywhere provides the key to truth. It is in all religions of equal if not of greater truth than the imperfect and sometimes falsified documentary evidence we at present possess of their origin and history.

Whatever may be the case upon the purely historical questions which have been raised in connection with the Shâstra, with respect to doctrine and practice, the first and simplest course is to learn from the lips of its living adherents what in fact they are, and, in so far as they can be given, the reason of and authority for them.

Mere book-learning (pustake likitâ vidyâ), will not carry the student the full way without error. It must be supplemented by information derived from the Tântrik Âchâryyas and Gurus. The truth of the learning so gained can only be tested by personal experience.

Hindu beliefs, to be understood aright, should, if possible, be learned both of those who have not, as also of those who have, received an English education. The latter—in the past, at any rate—has generally involved the neglect of, and (prior to the recent national movement) often resulted in a contempt for, all that is ancient and specifically Hindu, whether in Religion, Literature, or Art.[1] In its tendency it is not only—under its present conditions, at any rate, and whether for good or ill—destructive of tradition, but also in varying degrees of the *mentality* which originally produced the beliefs, and by which alone they may be completely apprehended. Even in cases where competency assumes a favourable attitude

[1] As regards the two former, see the observations in Babu Dinesh Chandra Sen's valuable "History of Bengali Literature," published by the Calcutta University. As to Art, a limited residence in India will afford distressing proof.

towards the ancient teaching, there is often to be found a tendency to read modern ideas into it.

A modern Indian publicist and author[1] makes upon this matter some very just observations. In treating of the concept "Mother" as applied to India by her children, he says that there is no mere metaphor behind it, though most modern educated Hindus understand the word in a poetical and metaphorical sense. "But this is," he says, "because their education and environment have more or less completely diverted their thought and imagination from the ancient *realities* of their language and literature. There are, indeed, numerous words in common use amongst us to-day that have entirely lost their original sense, *owing to the loss of the genuine thought-life of the people* in the wilderness of un-understood and un-assimilated foreign words and concepts accumulated by our present system of education. *With the Europeanization of our minds and modes of thinking*, even our words have been perceptibly Europeanized." This criticism has a very extensive application, and one is reminded of it at every step in reading the works of English-educated Hindus on Hindu life and thought, which their prudent reader will in some instances do well to peruse, bearing the above well-founded remarks in mind. As regards his countrymen, the author, in the second volume[2] of this work, observes: "Nowadays, most of those who represent the ideal type of a learned man in society are considered ignorant and devoid of all sense in the community of the Religious (Sâdhakas)." It is also to be remembered that amongst the English-speaking Hindus who have attained success and even distinction there are many who, being of other castes, have neither inherited the traditions of the Brâhmana nor had the benefit of his teaching. Interpretations coming from these classes are likely (though exceptions may exist) to suffer by reason of their ancient disabilities.

1 Bepin Behary Pal, "The Soul of India," p. 145.

2 See chapter on Gurukula and Kulaguru.

The Tantratattva (Principles or subject matter of Tantra), of which the first part[1] is here translated, is, so far as I am aware, the only considerable modern work of its kind. It was written in Bengali by Pandit Shiva Chandra Vidyârnava Bhattâchâryya,[2] and first published some twenty years ago, being now in its second edition.

The present work is a defence of the Tantra, of which Shâstra the author is an adherent and a polemic, undertaken in the interests of Hindu orthodoxy in its Shâkta and Tântrika form against Secularism on the one hand, and on the other the religious eclecticism and various "reforming" movements, of which, when the book was first written, the Brâhmasamâj was a leading type. In fact, in parts the book reads like an orthodox Catholic protest against "modernism," and is thus interesting as showing how many fundamental principles are common to all orthodox forms of belief, whether of West or East.

The author of the Tantratattva is a well-known Tântrik Pandit, preacher, and secretary of the Sarvamangalâsabhâ of Benares, who, happily for our purposes, knows no English. His work, which is written in Bengali, may therefore be taken to be an accurate popular statement of modern orthodox views on the subject treated of by him. The word "Tattva" is a very comprehensive one, which it is by no means always easy to translate. I have rendered the title of the book as "Principles of Tantra," though, maybe, as a friend has pointed out, it should be "Subjects of Tantra." The work deals, it is true, with chosen topics of Tantra. This, however, also involves a statement of certain fundamental principles which govern Shâstrik teaching on the subjects dealt with, and this as well as the contents of possible

[1] The work was originally published in one volume. The second edition has been divided into two parts, of which the first only has been published, the other being, when this was written, in the press.

[2] Editor of the journal *Shaivi*, and author of several other works—"Gitânjali," "Mâ," "Svabhâva o abhâva," "Vidyârnaver durgotsava," "Kartâ o Mana," "Pîthamâlâ," "Gangesha."

future volumes must be my justification for giving the book a more ambitious title.

The author is both a poet and a preacher—a circumstance which accounts for the rhetorical style and popular devotional character of the work. Apart from such intrinsic merits as it may possess, it is of value as a document which records the thought and workings of an Indian mind affected but little, if at all, by the current notions of the day. It deals in the main, and in a popular way, with the philosophical and religious grounds of the orthodox system in its Shâkta form. As regards some of its practical aspects, the author has considered that this was a subject fitter for the reader's Guru than for a book addressed to the public at large. It may therefore have proved a disappointment to those who, at the mention of Tantra, always expect to hear of rituals with wine and woman, the midnight circle (Chakra), black magic in the cremation grounds, and so forth. The constant desire to hear of such things is not evidence of a true interest in the Shâstra, but a confession of personal weakness.[1] To such it may come as a surprise to learn that the Tantra also concerns itself with matters of undoubted respectability even to its critics, and of universal, if less sensational, interest. It is commonly assumed by such persons (though altogether erroneously) that the Tantra Shâstra is only concerned with the Chakra ritual of those who are called (but incorrectly so) "left-hand" upâsakas, who follow vîrâchâra.[2] This, how-

[1] Inquiry as to these matters is, to use a chess term, a common though bad "opening" for those who have a real desire to know the Shâstra.

[2] In "Non-Christian Religions," by Howard, pp. 77-78. The author, after a statement that the "Tântrik System" originated with the Buddhist monk Asanga, says: "*Further than this* we must decline to plunge, even with the parts of the Tantra accessible to English readers." I am unaware of any parts "accessible to English readers" when this statement was made, and the author was evidently ignorant of any other.

ever, is of course not the fact. On the contrary, the main subjects of Tantra are Mantra and Sâdhana in all its forms. It is also the chief repository of Yoga practice, and its general range of subject, as hereafter mentioned, is encyclopædic.

As Professor B. K. Sarkar has well said, the encyclopædias of India known under divers names, such as Sanghitâs, Purânas, and Tantras, are really generic terms under which the *whole culture* of certain epochs in Indian history found expression and currency. He adds that, while it is difficult and sometimes impossible to assign to such storehouses of information respecting the national life the names of any particular authors or compilers and the question of their dates may never be solved satisfactorily, they furnish undeniable, though sometimes conflicting accounts, of the manners and customs, rites and ceremonies, sects and Sampradâyas, sentiments and traditions, which prevailed among the Hindus for epochs extending over hundreds of years.

The translation is primarily the work of my friend Babu Jnânendralâl Majumdâr, himself a Bengali. My own part has consisted in its revision. The translation may read rather cumbrously in parts, but this is due to our desire to keep as close as possible to the somewhat discursive and rhetorical form of the original. I have added some explanatory notes to the text. I should have liked to have made the notes fuller if it could have been done without overloading the text. I have, however, referred in the notes to the Introduction written for my edition of the Mahânirvâna Tantra,[1] where I have explained at greater length such terms as "yantra," "mantra," "mudrâ," "nyâsa," "panchatattva," the "shatchakra," and others, and have in a general and summary way dealt with sâdhana, upâsana, and hathayoga. I have retained certain technical Sanskrit terms

[1] The references to the Introduction are, unless otherwise stated, to that work.

in the text, as there is no corresponding English word which accurately gives their meaning.

The following pages deal with certain general aspects of the Shâstra, its nature, origin, age, and authority—subjects which were either not then treated of or were more summarily referred to. If upon some of these topics, such as the age of the Shâstra, I have not presented sufficiently certain and detailed conclusions, it is because, for want of the necessary knowledge, I am unable to do so. The subject is a novel one, and possibly many years of inquiry into Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan records[1] will have to be made before opinions of any finality can be formed as to many matters in and touching the Shâstra.

* * * * *

Current definitions of Tantra as "Sacred writings of the Hindus," "Scriptures of Shâktas," "Collections of Magical Treatises," and the like, are either inaccurate and insufficient, or by their generality useless. A type of such inaccurate statements characterized by the usual vagueness and indecision says that: "The Tantras are a later development of the Puranic creed. They are the writings of Shâktas or votaries of the female energy of some Divinity (*sic*), mostly the wife of Shiva. Such ideas are not altogether absent in the Puranic works. But in the Tantras they assume a peculiar character, owing to the admixture of magic performances and mystic rites of perhaps an indelicate nature. Amarasinha knows not of them."[2] In passing, it may be noted that this reference to the Amarakosha is a common one. It is true that the word Tantra is not mentioned in the Svargavarga of that book. On the other hand, those who so

1 Indian tradition connects China and the Tantra, and both Chinese and Tibetan records are reputed to contain Sanskrit works which have long since disappeared from India.

2 "History of Classical and Sanskrit Literature," by M. Krishnamacharyya, M.A., B.L., p. 34.

cite it omit to state that some other ancient Shâstras, including the Atharvaveda, are not there mentioned; and in the Nânârthavarga reference is made to Âgama Shâstra, which is one of the names of Tantra. An anonymous author who writes on what he calls "Transformed Hinduism"[1] says, after a description of the Purânas, "Another literature of a still more degrading type has been incorporated in the modern Hinduism, and this is the religious books called the Tantras, of which there are sixty-four volumes.[2] These books are mostly manuals of mysticism and magic, written otherwise very much on the same lines as the Purânas. The religion advocated in these books is the exponent (*sic*) of Saktism, the wife of Siva (*sic*), under her various manifestations." Whilst the Indian author last quoted rather vaguely refers to "mystic rites of perhaps an indelicate character" the book now cited more definitely affirms. "It is a licentious worship, and leads to cruelty, self-indulgence, and sensual gratification. Hence it is a blot upon the 'Modern Hinduism.' This sect goes under the name of the Bahm Marges (*sic*), or the secret sect."[3] The accounts of these and other uninformed authors treat the Tantra as a Shâstra of the Shâktas only where they do not as in the last cited quotation regard it merely as the Shâstra of the Vâmâchâra community of Shâkta Sâdhakas.

The word Tantra has various meanings, and amongst others Shâstra generally, and therefore does not neces-

[1] P. 180.

[2] The author, in speaking of these "volumes," as he calls them, is thinking of the 64 Tantras assigned to each of the three krântâs, which make them, however, so far as such divisions are concerned, 192 and not 64.

[3] The author means the vâma mârga, or vâmâchâra, as it is ordinarily called. The Tantra does not only deal with this "sect," which is one only of its âchâras: the tenets of which the author does not understand. Dakshinâchâras and others are also followers of Tantra. The work is incorrect both as to the Tantra and other Shâstras and practices of the Hindus which it proposes to "transform."

sarily denote a religious Shâstra.[1] In the sense, however, in which the term is most widely known and is here used, it denotes that body of religious scripture (Shâstra) which is stated to have been revealed by Shiva as the specific scripture of the fourth or present Kali age (yuga). This is the definition of the Tantra according to the Shâstra itself.

There are four such ages (Mahâyuga)—namely, the Satya yuga, or golden age; the Treta yuga age, in which righteousness (dharma) decreased by one-fourth; the Dvâpara yuga, in which dharma decreased by one-half; and the present Kali yuga, the most evil of the ages, in which righteousness exists to the extent of one-fourth only. At the close of this last age the Kalki Avatâra of Vishnu, "the rider on the white horse," will destroy iniquity and restore the rule of righteousness. Each of these ages has its appropriate Shâstra, or Scripture, which is designed to meet the requirements of the men of each age.

The Hindu Shâstras are classed into Shruti, Smriti, Purâna, and Tantra. The three last all assume the first as their base, and are, in fact, merely special presentments of it for the respective ages. It has been said that the Tantras "are regarded by those who follow them as a fifth Veda as ancient as the others and of superior authority."[2] No Shâstra is or can be superior to the Veda. That practical application of its teachings, however, which is prescribed in the Tantra is to be followed in preference to the vaidikâchâra in the Kaliyuga. The relations of the Veda to the Tantra

[1] Thus in the Shabdashaktiprakâshikâ it is said: "Tarkangtantranchavidushâ vidushângtoshakârikâ, kriyate jagadīshena"; where Tantra means the theory or science of argument. So the Panchatantra, which the so-called "Tantrik Order of America" includes in its *International Journal* amongst the Sanskrit and Tibetan Tantras, is not a Tantra in the sense here dealt with at all, but a book of fables.

[2] Beveridge, "History of India," ii. 77. And to the same effect "Biblical, etc., Encyclopædia," McClintoch and Strong, xii. 864.

has been compared with that of the Jivâtmâ to the Paramâtmâ. The Tantra is said by its adherents to represent the inner core of the former. Professor de la Vallée Poussin says[1] : " Si l'on veut instituer une comparaison qui d'ailleurs n'est pas sans danger on sera frappé des *ressemblances inaperçues* qui permettent de rapprocher ces deux manifestations si différentes de la pensée Hindoue, le Védisme et le Tantrisme." These resemblances which struck the learned author are, of course, due to the fact that there is a base common to the Veda and the Tantra, the latter being, according to orthodox notions, a branch of the Vaidik tree. It is only those who would altogether disassociate the Tantra from the Veda who will experience any surprise at finding resemblances between the Shâstras for the respective ages. As the Kulârnava Tantra says, for each age (yuga) a suitable Shâstra is given—namely, in Satya-yuga, Shruti; in Treta, Smriti; in Dvâpara the Purânas; and in the Kali age the Tantra.[2] The truth to be taught ever remains the same, though the method of inculcating it varies with the ages. Current definitions, when not incorrect, fail to bring out this character of the Tantra as a Yuga (age) Shâstra and its relations to the other Scriptures. As, however, our author well says[3] it is by no means impossible that now towards the end of the Kali age a few parasites should be found growing on some of its branches.

The original and highest source of dharma is Shruti, or that "which has been heard," and which is the *ipsissima verba* of divine revelation. The Vedas are apaurusheya

[1] Bouddhisme Études et Matériaux.

[2] Krite shrutyuktâchârastretâyyâng smritisambhavah
Dvâpare tu purânoktang kalau âgamakevalam.
See also Mahânirvâna Tantra, chap. i., verse 28, and Kubjikâ Tantra, where Shruti, Smriti, and Purâna are assigned to the first three ages, and Tantra to the fourth. See p. 382, *post*.

[3] At p. 134 *post*. And as to the relation of Âgama and Veda, see Mahâbhâgavata cited, *post*, p. 193.

(without any personal composer), manifested to the Rishis, who were not their authors, but only their Seers (drashtârah). The term "Shruti" is sometimes used in (what is to some) an extended sense, as where Kulluka Bhatta speaks of Tantra (which has sometimes been described as the fifth Veda) as Shruti (vaidikî tântrikî-chaiva dvividhâ kírttitâ shrutih). Popularly, however, the term is limited to the four Vedas—Rik, Sâma, Yajus, and Atharva—and the Upanishads, of which, Professor Paul Deussen says: "Die Upanishads sind für den Veda was für die Bibel das neue Testament ist."[1] In its primary significations the term "Vedânta" means the latter part of the Veda. The Jnânakânda of the Vedas is therefore the Vedânta in the original sense of the word. As such it is Shruti, and therefore in this sense the Vedânta is identical with the Upanishads, which teach as the gist of Vaidik doctrine the knowledge of the Absolute Being (Paramâtmâ) and union with It. The Devas worshipped in the Mantras of the Karmakânda are, as well as the whole visible universe, but manifestations of It—the "Tat Sat," or the Reality. Based on Upanishad is the Vedânta Darshana, or philosophy embodied in the Vedânta Sutras ascribed to Vyâsa, which have again been the subject of the commentaries known as Shangkarabhâshyam (of Shangkarâchâryya), Shrîbhâshyam (of Râmânuja), Mâdhvabhâshyam (of Madhva), and the less important Govindabhâshyam.

Smriti is "that which is remembered," and has been handed down by Rishis. It is regarded as the expression of the Divine will conveyed to mankind by inspiration through the agency of human beings. It is divided into the Shrauta sûtras, dealing with Vaidik ceremonies, and the Grihya sûtras, concerning the household rites; the prose Dharma sûtras, which lay down rules of law properly so called (of which there are various charanas or schools, such as those of Gautama, Baudhâyana,

1 "Die Geheimlehre des Veda" (1909).

Âpastamba, Vashishtha, and others), and Dharma Shâstras, or metrical versions of previously existing dharmasûtras, such as the Code of Manu (Manusmriti), the Yâjnavalkya, Nârada, Parâshara Smritis, and other fragmentary Dharma Shâstras and secondary Smritis of later periods. On these Smritis there are various commentaries, such as those of Medhâtithi, Kulluka Bhatta, and others on the Manusmriti; the commentaries on the Yâjnavalkya Smriti by Vijnâneshvara (known as the Mitâksharâ), and others; commentaries on the Parâshara Smriti; and other commentaries such as those on the Mitâksharâ. These commentaries have given rise to various schools of law, such as the Mitâksharâ, Dâyabhâga, Mithilâ, and others. Smriti provides for pravritti dharma, as the Upanishads had revealed the path of nivritti, or, as it is loosely called, "renunciation."

The third Shâstra, that of the Dvâpara yuga, is that contained in the Purânas, the principal of those now extinct being eighteen in number.[1] They by myth and story convey in an exoteric manner the doctrines of the Vedas to the declining intelligence and spirituality of the men of the third age. Like, however, the Tantra, they deal with nearly every subject of knowledge—theogonies, cosmogonies, genealogies, chronology, the astronomical, physical, and other sciences. In addition to the Mahâpurânas, there are the secondary Purânas or Upapurânas.[2] Both of these are referred to in the Mahânirvâna Tantra, when dealing with the Shâstra of the different ages, as Sanghitâ. This word, which literally means "collection," and, according to the Shabdaratnâvali, includes

[1] The Vishnu; Bhâgavata (it is matter of dispute whether this is the Shrimadbhâgavata or Devi Bhâgavata, both of which are largely quoted in this book); Nâradiya; Garuḍa; Padma; Varâha; or Vaishnava Purânas; Shiva, Linga, Skanda, Agni (or, according to other accounts, Vâyu), Matsya, Kurma; or Shaiva Purânas; the Brahma. Brahmânda, Brahmavaivarta, Mârkandeya, Bhavishya, and Vâmana Purânas.

[2] Kâlikâ, Sanatkumâra, Nârasingha, and others.

Dharmma Shâstra, Smriti, Shrutijîvikâ, also comprises[1] Purâna, Upapurâna, Itihâsa (history such as Mâhâbhârata and Râmâyana), the work of Vâlmîki, Vashishtha, and others.

The specific Shâstra for the fourth or Kaliyuga (according to orthodox views the present age) is the Tantra. Though there are Âgamas or Tantras which are called Shaiva and Shâkta or Devî (according to the particular form of the One which is regarded therein as Ishtadevatâ), it is, according to orthodox notions, a mistake to regard the Tantra generally as if it were a petty Shâstra of any particular division of Hindu worshippers. It is said, on the contrary, to be an universal Shâstra governing all men in the Kali age, though particular provisions in it may have reference to particular divisions of worshippers. Thus, while certain communities who perform the rahasyapûjâ make use of wine in worship, others do not, and it is, in fact, forbidden to them by the Tantra itself, as is the specific Shaktipûjâ associated with such use. So the Nityâ Tantra prohibits the latter in the case of the Pashu[2] (râtrau naiva yajeddevîng sandhyâyâng vâparânhake). On the other hand, other portions of the Tantra govern the whole orthodox Hindu community. So not only the Shakti mantra, but also the Vishnu and Shiva mantras are Tântrik. The Tântrika Sandhyâ may be said by all, and the Shâstra is the source of the bulk of the generally current ritual. A remark of a friend who read the first volume of this book, "that he could find little of the Tantra in it,"[3] is typical of the general misconceptions which prevail as to the nature of the Shâstra.

It is true that the so-called "Shâkta" Tantras prescribe, in the case of one of the Âchâras, a form of sâdhana

[1] See Brahmavaivarta Purâna, Jnânakhanda, chap. cxxxii.

[2] Because such worship connotes maithuna, which is not for the pashu on the path of pravritti, and who is still in the heavy bonds of desire.

[3] Because it does not deal with those *portions* of the Tantra which are concerned with the Panchatattva, vîrâchâra, etc.

peculiar to this âchâra known as the Panchatattva,[1] or worship with wine, meat, fish, grain, and woman (Shakti): and not uncommonly the Tantra is associated with such worship only, with the result that a "Tântrik" has come to connote, in the minds of many, merely a Hindu who practises this Sâdhana. Less narrow and crude notions popularly associate the Tantra with the Shâkta cult only, though they would include all forms of worship within the Shâkta community, and do not limit the scope of governance of the Tantra to the community of Vâmâchârins worshipping with the râjasika Panchatattva. The reason for such views appears to be this: Though there may have been Shaiva Tantras, as there have been what are called Shaiva Purânas, and there are Tantras such as the Râdhâ Tantra, which deal with the Vishnu cult; and though in ordinary worship there is adoration of the "Five Devatâs[2]" (Panchopâsanâ), yet in those scriptures which are more usually referred to when the Tantra is spoken of, the worship of Shakti assumes a more special form. All such notions, however, as regards Tantra, though popular, bespeak according to its followers a fundamental misconception of the scope of the Shâstra.[3] Properly speaking, a Tântrik should be defined as one

[1] This is the term used by Tântriks themselves in speaking of the conjoined elements. Vulgarly, they are called the "five M's" (panchamakâra), because each of the ordinary names of the elements commences with that letter (madya, mângsa, matsya, mudrâ, maithuna). Some of these have, however, esoteric names used by Tântriks amongst themselves. "Latâ Sâdhana" is a better and in some cases more accurate description of the fifth tattva than the word "maithuna" with its vulgar implications.

[2] Shiva, Vishnu, Sûryya, Ganesha, and the Devî.

[3] According to the views (whether historically justifiable or not) of Tântrik Pandits with whom I have discussed this matter, it is not as though there were separate and conflicting Shâstras, but one Shâstra—the Tantra with different sections appropriate to the various divisions in the community of worshippers. So, again, the Purânas constitute one body of Shâstra, though any particular Purâna may appear to give support to the sectarian hypothesis by reason of its emphasizing the cult of some particular Devatâ.

who is governed by and follows the provisions of Tantra which are applicable to his particular case. In 1881 Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra[1] wrote that the followers of Tantra might be reckoned by the hundreds of thousands, and that the life of many an Indo-Aryan (he might have said, in one way or another, practically all) was that of "bondage to its ordinances." As a Yuga Shâstra, the Tantra claims to govern all orthodox communities of worshippers in the Kaliyuga. But this does not mean that all its provisions are applicable to each one of them. The contrary is the case. There are some matters, such as Mantratattva, which are of common applicability to all such communities. There are other matters which are peculiar to, and govern only, a particular community or section of it. But both the common and special provisions have the same Shâstra as their source. It is, however, not here meant that every practice followed by the orthodox[2] communities is of Tântrik origin. Some rites, such as that of Homa, have descended from Vaidik times. Others are of modern origin. Thus, to take one instance from amongst others: the Vaishnavas sing and dance and recite the name of Hari (Vishnu) in Kîrtans which are of a popular and emotional character. This mode of worship was introduced by the great Chaitanya Deva to meet the needs of his time, and has nothing in common with the formal and intellectual character of the Tântrik ritual. As to this, the author says:[3] "When Chaitanya Deva deluged all Bengal with huge waves of the name of Hari, he observed that Brâhmana, Kshatriya, and Vaishya families were on the verge of ruin. He thought that in the then state of

[1] "Indian Aryyans" (1893), vol. i., p. 404.

[2] I thus exclude all the little sects, some of a very peculiar and original character, with which India abounds, though sometimes loosely affiliated, or claiming to be affiliated, to the larger ones; such as, apparently, the Chaliya Pantha of Jodhpur, which Sellon, in his Annotations, calls "Kauchiluas."

[3] P. 259.

society, full of middle-class (Navashâkha) Shudras, incompetent for either the Vaidik or Tântrik dharma, Harinâm sangkîrtana[1] was the best form of dharma (religion), and consequently he preached that dharma." Though some may nowadays be disposed, through ignorance or other reasons, to dispute their connection with the Shâstra, the matter may be put to some very simple tests. If such disputant be orthodox (whether Shaiva, Vaishnava, or Shâkta), he might, if he would answer such a question, be asked whether he has been initiated, and, if so, in what form—what mantra he then received, and where that mantra comes from.[2] And then, when worshipping before an image[3] in Sâkâra upâsanâ, with the sixteen articles of worship (shoḍasha upachâra), inquiry may be made as to the authority for such image-worship, and in what Shâstra this ritual and the rules relating to Nyâsa, Bhûtashuddhi, and so forth, is to be found. The answer in all these and similar cases will be the Tantra. On the other hand, as above stated, certain provisions of the Shâstra may have no applicability to a particular Sâdhaka. As the Ishtadevatâ of the various religious communities differs, so in some respects does the pûjâ and sâdhana. The Basil leaf (tulsî) is sacred to Vishnu; the Bael (bilva) to Shiva; the Scarlet hibiscus or China Rose to the Devî. Whilst animal sacrifice is made to Kâlî, it is forbidden in the worship of the aspect of the One which is named Vishnu. The use of the râjasika panchatattva is prescribed for Shâktas initiate in Vâmâchâra. It is forbidden to the Shâkta not initiate,

[1] The singing of Vishnu's (Hari's) name with music and dancing. Among the Vaishnavas there is a good deal of worship of a congregational character.

[2] Thus in the Vishnu mantra "Klîng klîng Gopâla," Klîng is a Tântrik vîja which is to be found in no other Shâstra but the Tantra. In the same way, in the Krishna mantra, given in the notes to p. 112, Aing and Shrîng are Tântrik vîjas.

[3] I include under this term not merely the image strictly so-called, but also the jar (ghata) in Devî worship, and the lingam and shâlagrâma in Shaiva and Vaishnava upâsanâ, respectively.

and to other communities of worshippers. But both the injunctions and the prohibitions have as their authority the same Shâstra,[1] which governs in some way or other all orthodox communities.

In short, it is considered an error to regard the Tantra as the petty Shâstra of any religious sect only, and a still greater mistake to limit its operation to that which is but one only of its particular methods or divisions of worshippers (âchâras).

As mentioned later, the Tantra deals with all matters of common belief and interest, from the doctrine of the origin of the world to the laws which govern kings and the societies which they have been divinely appointed to rule, medicine and science generally. The Tantra is not only the basis of popular Hindu practice, on which account it is known as the Sâdhana Shâstra, but is the repository of esoteric belief and practices, particularly those relating to yoga and mantratattva. Indeed, as regards the last, which is one of the most peculiar, and at the same time most profound, aspects of Hindu teaching, the Tantra is to such an extent the acknowledged repository of this spiritual science that its other name is the Mantra Shâstra. Its claims to such a name could not have been made good were there not some ground for its assertion that it is a Yuga Shâstra for the Kali age. As to which Tantras, however, are authoritative there appear to be differences of opinion, such differences being due either to a mistaken sectarianism, or possibly to real divergences as regards doctrinal thought and historical descent.

[1] This is overlooked in the common, though erroneous, appellation—"right hand" and left hand" worship, used in a sense as if the two had no Shâstrik connection with one another. The worship is not "right" and "left" in the sense of "proper" and "improper," orthodox and heterodox. Each is a recognized form of worship, presented by the "Tantra" for differing grades of its Sâdhakas. Each has a common authority. Therefore no follower of the Tantra which prescribes these two âcharâs thus speaks of them.

The Tantras are referred to as Âgamas. An Indian author[1] and student of the Shaivâgama expresses the opinion that the Âgamas have branched out from the same stem of the Vaidik tree which produced the earlier Upanishads, and were at one time as widespread in India as the Upanishads themselves; that, like the Upanishads, the Âgamas also became in course of centuries the basis of a number of "creeds" which, unanimous in accepting the essentials of the Âgamic teaching, were divergent as regards rituals, observances, and minor essential details. He says: "The Âgamas contend that they constitute the truest exegesis of the Vedas, and their origins are certainly as ancient as those of some of the classical Upanishads. If the Fire worship be regarded as the ritual inculcated in the Vedas as the outer symbolism of spiritual truths, the temple worship may, on its side, be also said to assume a similar importance in regard to the Âgamas. For the rest, it will be seen that in India at the present day there is hardly a Hindu who does not observe some kind of temple orship or another, which points to the conclusion that the Âgamas have had, in one form or another, an universal hold upon the continent of Hindu India, and that their influence tells." The principles and ritual of Shaivaism are said to be determined by the Âgamas or Tantras, which are twenty-eight in number, from Kâmika to Vatula.

According to some, the Vedas issued from four out of the five mouths of Shiva, and the Tantra of the "higher tradition" (ûrddhvâmnâya) from His central or fifth mouth. The other Tantra is said by some to have proceeded from the current issuing "below the navel"[2] of the Deva. According to another account, all the mouths of Shiva gave issue to those Tantras which spring from the "upward current," and the others are

[1] Dr. V. V. Râmana Shastrin, in his Introduction to J. M. Nallasvami Pillai's "Studies in Shaiva Siddhânta."

[2] See *post*.

the produce of the "downward current" "below the navel."[1] According, however, to both versions a distinction is made between the two classes of tradition. In the Lalitâ Sahasranâma, Bhâskararâya, commenting on the Shloka in which the Devî is addressed as Nijâjnâ-rûpâ Nigamâ, (the "Nigama are the expression of Thy commands"), says:[2] "Athavâ santi vedânuyâyîni shaiva-tantrâni kâmikâdînyashtâvingshatih vedaviruddhâni[3] kâpâlabhairavâdîni cha teshu vaidikâni nigamapadavâ-chyâni parameshvarasya mukhâdudbhûtatvâdâjnârû-pâni napunarnâbhyadho bhagâdutpannâni vedavirud-dhânîtyarthah." He there, referring to the Devî Bhâgavata and Skanda Purânas, states that there are twenty-eight Shaiva Tantras commencing with Kâmika which adhere to the Vaidik injunctions, as there are others commencing with Kâpâla, Bhairava, etc. (assigned by him to the "downward current"), which do not, and the reference in the Lalitâ to Nigama is, according to his views, to the former class. As they sprang from the mouth of Parameshvara, they are said to be the form of the Devî's commands. The five Tantras commencing with Kâmika sprang from the sadyojâta face of Shiva. From the other four faces—viz., the vâmadeva, aghora, tatpu-rusha, and ishâna—sprang respectively the five Tantras, Dîpta, and others of its class, the five Vijaya and others, the five Vairochana and others, and the eight Tantras Prodgita and others. These twenty-eight are said to have sprung from the "upward current," and the others from the current issuing "below the navel."[4] The

1 See as to the meaning of these expressions *post*.

2 Verse 67.

3 As to whether the rahasyapûjâ of the Tantra is opposed to the Veda, see *post*. In similar fashion Aufrecht (see Adikarmapradipa) says: "Shubbagama appellata a via Vedis præscripta non discedunt ideoque samayachara appellantur."

4 Urddhasrotobhavâ ete nâbhyadhasrotasah parâh; the former existing in the chaste (urddharetas), whose "stream of life" (retas) tends upwards.

Kâmika identifies these twenty-eight Shaiva Tantras or Âgamas with various parts of the body of the Devî, Her ornaments and garments; and all other auxiliary and supplementary Tantras with the hair on Her body. For the body of the great Îshvarî, who is one with Îshvara Her Lord, is contemplated upon under the form of all the Tantras (Sarvatantrarûpâ). The same commentator,[1] citing the Kûrma Purâna, observes:

"Yâni shâstrâni drishyante lokesmin vividhâni tu
Shrutismritiviruddhâni dvaitavâdaratâni cha
Kâpâlang bhairavangchaiva shakalang gautamang matam
Evangvidhâni chânyâni mohanârthâni tâni tu
Ye kushâstrâbhiyogena mohayantîva mânavân
Mayâ srishtâni shâstrâni moháyaishhâng bhavântare."

In another place Devî says to Himavat: "Whatsoever Scriptures are found opposed to Shruti and Smriti devoted to dualism—viz., Kâpâla, Bhairava, Sakala, Gautama, and similar ones—exist for the purpose of bewilderment.[2] Those who are confused by false scriptures also confuse the world. These were all created by me for the sake of bewilderment."[3]

In the passage cited from the Lalitâ, Bhâskararâya refers to the Shaivâgamas or Shaiva Tantras, and, according to his apparently sectarian view, the other Tantras are those which proceed from "below the navel."

There are, however, what are called Shâkta Tantras,

[1] Lalitâ, verse 137.

[2] The Devî is, while the great Liberatrix, also the "all-bewildering" (Sarvamohinî). When devoid of Her grace, men are bewildered by Her Mâyâ.

[3] Similar language is used as regards the Atheistic School in chap. lxxvii. of the Kâlikâ Purâna, which says: "Vámah kayobrâhmanopi mângsamadyâdibhuktaye, kritomayâ mohanâya chârvvâkâdipravarttakah." The reference here is to the nâstika doctrines of Chârvvâka and his followers.

and to these the term Tantra is more commonly applied, because in this form they have been perhaps more known and spoken of According to the view of the author cited, the "Shaivâgamas are not related to the Shâkta Tantras by any organic community of thought or descent."[1] Whatever be the historical basis of this conclusion, which is not stated, it is to be noted (for the thought is profound) that in the passage from the Lalitâ, though different types of Tantra are said to have sprung from different currents, they are yet both represented as issuing from the body of the God. Shiva is represented as the author of all Âgamas. There is, in fact, but one source whence all forms of religion, as all else, come. If the ray of pure sattvik light appears to be variously coloured, or even at times clouded or obscured, it is not by reason of the alteration of its nature, but of the disturbing and darkening qualities of the other gunas constituting the Devî's substance manifesting in the Jîva. It is not without reason that Shiva, the Friend of all, is represented as surrounded by Bhûta and the demoniac hosts. If the Devî, as Vidyâ, liberates; by Her Mâyâ (from which the religious sense no more than any other is free), She also binds. The sectarian, whether a Shaiva or other, naturally discovers abundance of this mâyik play in the creed of his neighbour which he condemns. I doubt myself whether there exists at present material for conclusions of any degree of certainty as to the historical origin of the so-called Shâkta Tantras. Certainly no one has yet collected such as may exist. They are, however, I believe, at base (whatever may be the accretions they are said by some to have received) an outcome from the same Vaidik source, the Mother of all Dharma, as the Shaiva Tantras, though, having regard to the difference of âchâra, they may derive from this common source in different form.

That which is commonly regarded as telling against

[1] Dr. Râmana Shastrin, *loc. cit.* But see p. xlii, note 3, *post.*

this conclusion is the virâchâra ritual with the Panchatattva. It is said[1] by a modern Shaivite that the Shaivâgamas prohibit drink and the eating of flesh. Though we may recall both Vaidik usage and the curse of Bhrigu on those who follow the rites of Bhava: Vishantu shivadîkshâyâm yatra daivam surâsavam;[2] this prohibition is in accordance with the provisions of the "Shâkta" Tantras, which limit the ritual use of wine and flesh to the worshippers of Shakti initiate in vâmâchâra.

That the provisions of the Tantra which relate to the Panchatattva are opposed to the Veda is a notion which is declared by the Indian Tântrik pandits to be erroneous. Manu says:

"Na mângsabhakshane dosho na madye na cha maithune,
Pravrittireshâ bhûtânâng nivrittistu mahâphalâ."[3]

"There is no wrong in the eating of meat, nor in the drinking of wine, nor in sexual intercourse; for these things are natural to men. At the same time abstention therefrom is productive of great fruit."

He is doubtless there referring to those enjoyments which belong to the Pravritti Mârga—the use of meat and fermented liquor during the Vaidik age being well known. But such use formed also a part of its sacrificial and ritual system. As regards Latâsâdhana, the Kâlikopanishad of the Atharvaveda and other Shâstras are relied on as authorities by Tântrik Pandits in support of the Vîrâchâra ritual. It is unnecessary to deal with this ritual here, as its discussion forms no part of the author's

[1] Shaiva Siddhânta, 315, *v. ante.*

[2] Bhâgavata Purâna, cited in Muir, S.O.T., 377-382.

[3] So also the Mahânirvâna Tantra says: "Eating and sexual union, O Devi, are desired by and natural to men, and their use is regulated for their benefit in the ordinances of Shiva."

"Nrînâng svabhâvajang devi priyang bhojanamaithunam
Sangkshepâya hitâıthâyâ shaivadharmme nirûpitam."
(Ullâsa ix., verse 283.)

work. Not improbably (in part at least) originating in a doctrine intended for the detached non-dualistic initiate,[1] and kept closely secret,[2] it may have been perverted by the vulgar, to whom some portions of it became later known. The abuses of these commoner people, as time went on, developed such proportions as to ultimately obscure all other matters in the Tantra, thus depriving them of that attention which is their due.

The objections, however, which have been made to the Tântrik rahasyapûjâ have probably been the chief cause of the attack made upon the age and authority of the Shâstra. It would be beyond the limits of a general Introduction such as this to enter at length into this difficult and debated question. As the view which is to be found more commonly stated is adverse to the Shâstra on both these points, it may be shortly pointed out that the Tantra is referred to in works of acknowledged authority such as the Shrîmadbhâgavata, the celebrated Vaishnava Shâstra, the Devî Bhâgavata (which in the ninth skanda speaks of it as a Vedânga), and in the Varâha, Padma, Skanda, and other Purânas. In the first-named work Bhagavân says: "My worship is of three kinds, Vaidik, Tântrik, and mixed (mishra)," and in the fifth chapter of the eleventh Skanda of the same work it is said that Keshava assumes different forms in the different Yugas, and should be worshipped in different ways, and that in Kaliyuga he is to be worshipped according to the injunctions of Tantra. The great Shangkarâchâryya recognizes the Shâstra in his Ânanda Laharî and Shâktâmoda, as does Ânanda Tîrtha, the

[1] Thus, as regards worship with woman (Latâsâdhana), it is said that it is not possible for one who is a dualist devoid of the knowledge of Kula, and addicted to sexual intercourse, to duly follow Shiva's mandate. Hell follows lust. As the Tantrasâra says, "Lingayonirato mantrî rauravang narakang brajet" ("The Mantrîn addicted to lust goes to the Raurava Hell")—that is, the hell in which the qualities of the fiery tejas tattva exist in painful excess.

[2] Mâtriyonivat, as it is said.

commentator of Pûrnaprajnadarshana. The Shâstra is frequently quoted in the celebrated work on Smriti, the Ashtâvingshatitattva of Raghunandana, which is itself universally accepted as an authority throughout Bengal. In short, as the Veda issued from the mouth of Brahmâ, so the Âgama Shâstra is said to have come from that of Sadâshiva.[1] Current objections to the Tantra on the ground that it lacks the authority of Shruti, Smriti, or Purâna, and is of more recent date, are based, according to orthodox views, on a misconception. According to those views, all Shâstras are without beginning and eternal, as indeed in one sense they are, though their phenomenal appearance may be successive. Letters or sounds are the sensuous manifestation of words, the essence of which resides in the sphota or conception which existed from all eternity before ever these sounds or words were uttered. The phenomenal appearance of Tantra postdates the other Shâstras in the same sense as that in which the Kaliyuga is said to succeed to the earlier ages of the present Mahâyuga. There is, in fact, but one truth variously presented to the respective ages. So the Tantra has been said to exist in the Veda as the perfume exists in the flower. While the theoretical portion of the Gâyâtrî Tattva is contained in the Vedânta, the practical and ritualistic portion is in the Tantra. Both the theoretical exposition and practical application of universal principles varies with the needs of the ages and the Jîva living therein. It is said of the Devî: "Many are the paths which vary according to the Shâstras, but all leading to fruition (siddhi) merge in Thee alone, as all rivers merge and are lost in the sea."

[1] Some other authorities will be found cited in this book (Tantra Tattva, pp. 108-128 *et seq.*); and I summarize in the following pages the opinion of Mahâmahopâdhyâya Jâdaveshvara Tarkaratna, in his article on the antiquity of Tantra (Tantrerprâchînatva) in the Sâhitya Sanghitâ of Assin, 1317.

For orthodox views on this matter I will here refer the reader to our author and to a recent essay on the "Antiquity of the Tantra," by Mahâmahopâdhyâya Jâdaveshvara Tarkaratna.[1] The Pandit prefaces the matter by a notice of the views generally entertained by what are called "educated" Indians, which he summarizes as follows: They hold, he tells us, that the Tantras are of recent production; that to the Vaidik age succeeded the Upanishadik. Then followed the Pauranik age, and then, quite recently, that of the Tantras. But even then the latter Shâstra was not of general authority, having neither governance nor influence in other parts of India than Bengal, where alone it was predominant. There it was created by Bengali Pandits upon the model of the Buddhist teaching and practice of the Mahâyâna sect.[2] These Bengali Pandits are also alleged to have incorporated therewith the worship of Shakti, the goddess of the aboriginal barbarian inhabitants of Bengal. The date of many of the Tantras is said to fall within the last three hundred years, and, amongst others proofs of this, reference is made to the fact that the Yoginî Tantra mentions the name of the founder of the Kuchbehar Râj, which was established within that time.

These objections are then classified under four headings: (1) The Tantra is not an ancient Dharmma Shâstra of the Âryan race having effect in all parts of India, but was in force in Bengal alone, being, indeed, an invention of the Bengalis, who naturally honoured their own creation. (2) Amongst Mahâyâna Buddhists there is worship of Târâ, Vajrayoginî, Kshetrapâlâ, and the use of mantras, vîjas, and japa, in the cult of such Devatâs. There is similar worship in the Tantra, which must therefore be derived from Mahâyâna Buddhism. (3) Aboriginal tribes are worshippers of Shakti, ghosts, snakes, and trees. The Tantras also deal with such worship, and has therefore adopted the worship of such aborigines. (4) A

[1] See last note. [2] See p. 291, *post.*

book which relates an incident which took place not more than three hundred years ago cannot itself be older.

To these objections the Mahâmahopâdhyâya replies as follows: As to the first, he rejoins that Tântrik influences are to be found, not only in Bengal, but throughout India. Just as the Bengalis of the higher castes are divided into Shâktas, Vaishnavas, and Shaivas, so it is with the peoples of Kâmarûpa, Mithilâ, Utkala, and Kalinga, and the Kâshmirian pandits. The Shakti mantra, Shiva mantra, and Vishnu mantra, are each Tântrik. Amongst Dâkshinâtyas,[1] Mahâmahopâdhyâya Subramanya Shâstri, and many others, are Shâktas. The late Mahâmahopâdhyâya Râma Mishra Shastrî, Mahâmahopâdhyâya Râma Shâstrî Bhâgavatâchârya, and many others, were and are Vaishnavas. Mahâmahopâdhyâya Shivakumâra Shastrî, and a number of others, are Shaivas. In Vrindâvana there are many Shâkta as well as Vaishnava Brâhmanas, though amongst the higher castes in Mahârâshtra and other Southern Indian countries, Shaivas and Vaishnavas are more numerous than Shâktas. Followers of the Pâshupata and Jangama cults are Shaivas whereas those of Mâdhavâcharyya and Râmânujâchâryya are Vaishnavas. Many in the North-West are initiated in the Râma mantra, which is to be found only in the Tantra. It is still more remarkable that, according to this author, the pandâs of Shrî Purushottama[2] are all Shâktas, and the priests of Kâmâkhyâ Devî[3] are all Vaishnaivas.

Passing to the second argument, he denies that similarity between two doctrines and practices is necessarily proof that the first is borrowed from the second. It may equally be argued the other way. If, because the Buddhists worship Târâ, Hayagrivâ and others with dhyânas and vîjas similar to those in the Tantra, it is contended

[1] Pandits of Southern India.

[2] Jagannâtha at Puri.

[3] Al Kamrup in Assam, a great Tântrika centre.

that the latter is derived from the former, it may equally well be urged that such Buddhist worship is taken from the Tantra. If the Hindu mind was moved by and drawn to the touching teachings of Buddhism, why, he asks, should it concern itself with the externals, and not with the fundamental principles of the religion to which it is so attracted? Why should the Hindu, instead of striving for Nirvâna, stand before Buddhist images, fashioned after Buddhistic models, and with folded palms pray for beauty, victory, glory, and the destruction of foes? There is obviously a great difference between yoga undertaken for the extinction of all desires, and such prayers to the Deity for wealth and the destruction of foes, as form part of the Vaidik religion. The Bhagavad-gîtâ preaches nishkâma dharma,[1] which, with the pursuit of spiritual knowledge leads to the acquisition of such knowledge, and thereafter to Nirvâna; and on this account the "educated" say that the Gîtâ is influenced by Buddhistic ideals. In the Tantra there is performance of work with desire, which is contrary to Buddhist teaching. Hinduism alone, of all religions, provides different forms of religious teaching for persons of differing religious competence (adhikâra). Buddhism does not. How, otherwise, is it possible to account for Buddhadeva's vairâgya,[2] his loss of faith in Hinduism, and his discovery of the new path whereby man shall escape the infirmities of old age and death. Buddhism, out of pity for all living creatures, forbids the sacrifice of animals. It is, he thinks, an astonishing proposition that Tântrikas followed such a religion, when at the same time they are supposed to have invented a novel Shâstra, enjoining the sacrifice of goats, buffaloes, and other animals, before images of Devas and Devîs, also drawn from Buddhism. While it is not to be expected that all will understand the complexities of Buddhist philosophy, pity is a virtue

[1] The performance of work selflessly, without desire for its fruit.
[2] Dispassion.

which goes with humble minds. If there be anything which might prove attractive in Buddhism to men in general, it is its prohibition against the slaughter of animals—an ordinance which melted the hearts of a large number of the Hindus and made them Buddhists. It is scarcely probable, then, that Hinduism should omit that which is fundamentally attractive in a religion which (in his view) denies the existence of God, and should inaugurate a new Shâstra (the Tantra) providing for the worship of Devas and Devîs, according to the tenets of the Buddhist Mahâyâna school. It is modern Vaishnavism, on the contrary, which, in its prohibition of animal sacrifice, is inspired by the Buddhistic principle that "cessation from the killing of animals is the highest form of religion." In the great yajna, which lasted a hundred years, Shaunaka and other Rishis used to listen to the Shrîmad-bhâgavata from the mouth of Sûta, and at the same time to sacrifice animals.[1] In the Ashvamedha yajna which King Yudishthira, the disciple of Krishna, performed under the guidance of Shrî Krishna himself, a horse was killed, offered to Devas, and eaten. Bhagavân Shrî Krishna himself hunted a boar under the command of Vâsudeva for the satisfaction of the Pitris in Shrâddha. The eleventh skandha of the Bhâgavata[2] explicitly states that the killing of animals in sacrifice is no killing.

Amongst the Vaishyas of Mathurâ, many had become Buddhists, and others Jains. Greatly moved as they were at the sight of Chaitanya's love for Krishna, and drawn thereby to Hinduism, they yet hesitated to return to it on the ground that it sanctioned the slaughter of animals in sacrifice. It was perhaps at that time that the Vaishnava teachers announced that the killing of animals was not sanctioned by their tenets, and thus succeeded in converting Buddhists and Jains to their faith. It is probably from this time that Vaishnava

[1] Skandha I.

[2] XI., Chapter v., shloka xiii.

families abandoned animal sacrifice on occasions of pûjâ. Although common Vaishnavas eat fish, the flesh of other animals is forbidden. In Bengal, Utkala, and other countries, Buddhist teachers adapted from Hinduism the establishment of images of Devas, the worship of such Devas with mantras and vîjas, and called themselves Mahâyâna Buddhists—a sect which, of course, came into existence long after the passing away of the Buddha. The Lalitavistara,[1] or biography of Shâkyasingha, states that he had a special knowledge of Nigama, Purânas, Itihâsa, and the Vedas. Whenever both Veda and Nigama are mentioned in the same passage, the latter term refers to Tantra, which goes by the names of Âgama and Nigama.[2]

Again, Shâkyasingha is made to say to the Bhikshukas:[3] "Such fools seek the protection of, and pay obeisance to, Brahmâ, Indra, Rudra, Vishnu, the Devî, Kârtikeya, Mother Kâtyâyanî, Ganapati, and others. Some perform tapasyâ in cremation grounds, and at the crossing of four roads."[4] Speaking of the practice of heretics (pâshandas), Shâkyasingha mentions the use of wine and flesh. Had not the Tântrik form of worship been then in existence how could he have known and spoken ill of it?[5] Seeing, also, what the Lalitavistara says, can it, he asks, be contended that the Tantra is derived from Mahâyâna Buddhism?

To the third objection the Mahâmahopadhyâya answers that the views there expressed are similar to those given under the second heading, and the rejoinder, therefore, is similar. It may, however, he says, be asked who are meant when the barbarian aborigines of India are spoken

[1] Chapter xii.

[2] *Vide ante.*

[3] Buddhist Sannyâsis.

[4] Lalitavistara, chap. xvii.

[5] This, of course, does not necessarily follow. All that is here proved is that Tântrik practices antedated the Lalitavistara, whatever be the date at which the latter was written. From the standpoint of Western criticism this and all similar orthodox arguments are weakened by the too ready credit sometimes given to the age and authority of the literary materials on which they rest

of. According to the English, such aborigines were Dravidians, Odras, and Paundrakas. Is it, he says, to be supposed that Bengali Pandits composed the Tantra Shâstra in imitation of the practices of Dravidians inhabiting the distant Deccan? Or was the Tântrik system adopted from Mundas, Santhâls, Garos, Meches, Kuches, Khasias, and other primitive inhabitants of Assam?[1] The Pandit hesitates "to lay this heavy burden of ignominy on the heads of Bengali Pandits" seeing that the Shakti Devatâ is established and worshipped in all parts of India. Thus Kâmâkhyâ is worshipped at Kâmarûpa, Vindhyavâsinî on the Vindhya Hills, Yogamâyâ and Paurnamâsî at Vrindâvana; Annapurnâ, Sankatâ, Tripurabhairavî, sixty-four Yoginîs, Kâlabhairavî, Durgâ, Shîtalâ, Mangalâ, and other Devis at Kâshi; Kushalî at Kaushalî; Pârvatî on the Sahya Hills, Poona; Guhyeshvarî in Nepal; Gâyatrî and Sâvitrî in Râjputâna; Lalitâ at Prayâga; Ugratârâ at Trihut; Mâyâdevî at Haridvâra;[2] Chandî on the Chandi Hills near Haridvâra; Jvâlâmukhî at Jalandhara;[3] Chhinnamastâ, some forty miles therefrom; Kâlî (whom King Prithvî worshipped) seven miles to the south of Delhi; Mumvâ in Bombay city; Mahâlakshmî, on the sea coast near Bombay; Kâlikâ on the Harsha Island, west of and near Mahâkâleshvara; Kshîrabhavânî near Kâshmîr; and Devî Mînâkshî, south of Madras.[4] All these Devîs (to which many others might be added) are still worshipped, and were established in their various places in distant and unknown ages. Even at the seat of Purushottama in Utkala,[5] Vimalâ is worshipped, so also are Sarasvatî Bhubaneshvarî, Kâlî, and Lakshmî. Obeisance is made to Subhadrâ[6] with the mantra: "Kâtyâyanî, salutation to

1 The Pandit's reply, of course, takes benefit from the folly of the statement he answers.

2 After whom the place (Hardwar) is called Mâyapurî in the Shâstrâ.

3 Where fire is said to ever burn to consume the offerings.

4 The Devî at Madurâ.

5 The temple of Jagannâtha (Vishnu) at Puri Orissa.

6 Sister of Jagannâtha.

Thee." Bhubaneshvarî is worshipped at Bhubaneshvara; Dhavaleshvarî at Dhavaleshvara; eight Shaktis, Virajâ, Indrânî at Yâjpur, and Katakachandî at Cuttack.

If it be argued that the Tantra Shâstra is of recent origin because it provides for the worship of Shakti, then the same observation must apply to the Purânas, Mahâbhârata, and even the Vedas and Upanishads. The Mahâbhârata contains hymns in honour of the Devî. The Shrimadbhâgavata provides for the worship of Umâ. The maidens of Vraja worshipped Kâtyâyanî. The Mârkandeya Purâna relates the greatness of Devî. In the Purânas Her greatness is sung. Numerous passages in proof of this may be culled from the Skanda, Brahma, Brahmavaivarta, Bhavishya, Padma, Devî, and Kâlikâ Purânas. The autumnal Durgâ Pûjâ is mentioned in many Purânas. It is an error to suppose that Raghunandana Bhattâchâryya alone has prescribed for the worship of Durgâ. Previous to him many others had done so, such as Shrîdatta, Harinâtha, Vidyâdhara, Ratnâkara, Bhojadeva, Jîmûtavâhana, Halâyudha, Râyamukuta, Vâchaspati Mishra, and many other renowned compilers Many well-known books written before the age of Raghunandana contain provisions for Durgâ Pûjâ, such as the Durgâbhaktitaranginî, Samvatsarapradîpa, Kâlakaumudî, Jyotishârnava, Smritisâgara, Kalpataru, Krityamahârnava, Krityaratnâkara, Kâmanipûjânibandha, Krityatattvârnava, Chakranârâyanî, Kriyâyogopasamvâra, Durgâbhaktiprakâsha, Dâkshinâtya, Kâlanirnaya, and Pûjâratnâkara.

Although the Bengali practice of worshipping earthen images of Durgâ with great pomp is not followed in all parts of India, yet She is everywhere worshipped in Ghatas (jars). Shrines which contain Her images are visited; nine-day vratas are made, fasts observed, and the Chandî read on the Mahâshtamî day. Even now the women of Vraja in Vrindâvana bathe in the Jumna early every

morning for the first nine days of the bright fortnight of the month of Âshvina, and worship images of the Devî, which they draw on the banks of the river. Readers of the Chhândogya, Talavakâra and other Upanishads are aware of the incident in which Umâ, the Daughter of the Mountain, riding a lion in a blaze of light, appeared to Indra and the other Devas in order to prove that it was not by their shakti that they lived and moved, but that all which was done was so done by virtue of that Mahâshakti. In the Veda there is the Sarasvatî sûkta, in the Yajurveda the Lakshmî sûkta, and in the tenth Mandala of the Rigveda the Devî sûkta. Even the worship of Devî Manasâ is based, not on the Tantra, but Purâna. And the same may be said as regards the worship of the Tulsî plant, and the Bael and Ashvattha-tree.[1] Far distant from Bengal, on the summit of Mount Govarddhana, there is an image of Devî Manasâ. And in the land of Vraja, where animal sacrifice is condemned, goats are sacrificed before this Devî. Snake worship exists in other countries than Bengal, and was not introduced by the Tantra Shâstra. A survey of the religious practices prevalent in ancient times and in other countries does not support the conclusion that because the Tantra advocates Shakti worship it is therefore of recent origin.

Passing to the fourth heading, the Pandit asks how it is that, if the Yoginî Tantra is at most only three hundred years old, Raghunanda Bhattâchâryya, the great Smârta, and Krîshnânanda Bhattâchâryya, contemporaries of Shrî Chaitanya, referred to and quoted it as an authority in the Smrititattva and Tantrasâra. On the other hand, it is common knowledge that if in some obscure family a great person (mahâpurusha), or a succession of great persons, is born, their descendants and disciples name the

1 The Tulsî and Ashvattha are worshipped, and bael leaves are offered to Shiva. Ashvattharupobhagavân vishnureva na sangshayah rudrarupovatastadvat palâsho brahmarûpadhrik. Padma Purâna Uttara Khanda; ch. clx.

members of that family after those of some other well-known family, so as to create the notion that the two families are the same. It was perhaps in this way he surmises that the Râj family of Kuch Behâr was raised to the position of being the descendants of Shiva mentioned in the Yoginî Tantra.

Mâdhavâchâryya, the commentator upon the Vedas, has, in dealing with the Pâtanjala Darshana in his compilation of the six Darshanas, quoted many passages from the Tantra Shâstra with reference to the ten forms of Sangskâras prescribed therein. Vâchaspati Mishra, the commentator upon the six Darshanas, has, in his commentary on the Pâtanjala Darshana, recommended dhyâna of Devatâs as prescribed in the Tantras. Bhagavân Shangkarâchârya, also, has, in the Shârîraka Bhâshya, made mention of the Tântrik Shatchakra. It is hardly necessary to say that none of these three great men—Shangkarâchârya, Mâdhavâchâryya, and Vâchaspati Mishra,—was a Bengali. Before the compilation of Krishnânanda's Tantrasâra, there were many compilers of Tantra, such as Râghavânanda, Râghavabhatta, Virûpâksha, and Govindabhatta. In his observations upon the Yantra of Nîlasarasvatî, in his Tantrasâra, Krishnânanda, observes: "Said by even Shrî Shangkarâchâryya." The famous Shakti Stotra,[1] named Ânandalaharî (wave of bliss)[2] is everywhere known to be the work of Shangkarâchâryya, and is, as such, universally recited by devotees before Devatâs with feeling and reverence. Compilations of Tantra, such as the Râmârchana Chandrikâ,[3] the Mantramuktâvalî, the Sârasangraha, the Bhuvaneshvarîpârijâta, the Sâradâtilaka, the Trîpurâsârasamu-

[1] Hymn to Shakti.

[2] See Arthur and Ellen Avalon's "Hymns to the Goddess" for his and other Hymns to the Devî.

[3] Passages compiled in the Râmârchana Chandrikâ have been quoted by Vâchaspati Mishra in the chapter on Vâsantî Pûjâ in his Krityachintâmini. This supports the antiquity of Râmârchana Chandrikâ.

chchaya, the Svachchhandasangraha, the Sârasamuchchaya, the Mantratantraprakâsha, and the Somabhujangâvalî, were prepared long before the time of Krishnânanda and Raghunandana. References to these books are to be found in the works of Krishnânanda and Raghunandana. In the well-known astronomical work called Dîpika, days for taking Dîkshâ (initiation) have been determined separately from those for commencement of education and investiture with the sacred thread (upanayana). That Dîkshâ must, therefore, be Tântrik Dîkshâ, distinct from Vaidic Dîkshâ or Upanayana. Compilations come into existence long after the preparation of original works and when capacity for their production has ceased. It is when ordinary folk find difficulty in establishing a concordance between the ordinances contained in numerous original and other works—that the learned undertake the making of compilations for the determination of the right forms of religious practice, the regulation of objections against the Shâstra, the establishment of a concordance between apparently conflicting authorities and the settlement of all disputed matters. A period of at least a thousand years must, in this author's opinion, be considered to have elapsed between the date of original works and that of compilations. Many of the compilers whose names have been mentioned lived a thousand years ago. There is therefore no ground, in the Pandit's opinion, for doubting that the Tantra Shâstra is at least two thousand years old. In the eleventh skandha of the Shrîmadbhâgavata it is said that Keshava (Vishnu) should be worshipped in the manner prescribed in the Tantra Shâstra;[1] and, again, that men desirous of acquiring jnâna (spiritual knowledge) should worship Bhagavân according to Vaidik and Tântrik ordinances.[2] The same book in the same skandha also says: "Hear how people should worship

[1] Chapter iii., shlokas 47 and 48. See Shrîdhara Svâmi's note.

[2] Chapter v., shloka 28. Shrîdhara Svâmî's note.

Me in the Kali age according to various Tantras.[1] They should observe my Yâtrâs (Dolayâtrâ, Rathayâtrâ, etc.), perform sacrifices, be initiated in the Vaidik and Tântrik modes, and undertake to perform the vrata in which I am worshipped."

In the Brahma Purâna it is said that people should enter into the temple of Bhuvaneshvara in the Garden of a Single Mango Tree.[2] and there worship Mahâdeva according to Vaidik and Tântrik rites. This passage has been quoted by Raghunandana in his Purushottama-tattva. The Kûrma Purâna says: "There are found in the world many Shâstras antagonistic to Shruti and Smriti. The ordinances of such Shâstras are tâmasik.[3] Karâla, Bhairava, Yâmala, and similar other books follow Vâmamârga,"[4] and so on. This passage, which is also contained in the Kûrma Purâna, has been quoted by Raghunandana and other compilers. The Pandit points out that Karâla, Bhairava, and Yâmala are Tântrik works, and that the Vâmamârga is a mode of Tântrik worship. In the Râmâyana there are references to Balâ and Atibalâ,[5] which are Tântrik, and the mode of acquiring which is given in the Tantrasâra. Râghava Bhatta and Raghunandana quote Nârada as to the nature of the Tântrik mode of worship for persons in impure conditions. In the Parâshara Bhâshya there is a quotation said to have been originally made by Govindabhatta, which says that mantras with Om should not be taught to Sudras, and so on. In Bhoja-râja's Vyavahârasamuchchaya there is reference to a passage stating that Upanayana and Dîkshâ should

[1] Chapter v., shloka 31. Shrîdhara Svamî's note.

[2] The town of Bhuvaneshvara.

[3] That is, the outcome of a state in which the tamoguna predominates.

[4] See Introduction to my edition of the Mahânirvâna Tantra.

[5] Vâlakânda, canto xxii., shlokas 12, 13, and 15. These are Vidyâs taught by Vishvâmitra to Râma and Lakshana.

not be performed whilst Vrihaspati[1] is in Râhu.[2] The Varâha says that learned men should worship Janârdana either according to the Vedas or according to the Tantras. The Padma Purâna, in its Uttarakhanda, asks how it is possible that one may become bhâgavata[3] without taking dîkshâ in the Vaishnavî cult? In the third chapter of the Nârada Pancharâtra it is said that whilst meditating on the six Chakras named Mûlâdhâra, Svâdhishthâna, Manipûra, Anâhata, Vishuddha, and Âjnâ, Shrî Krishna was seen in the thousand-petalled lotus, resplendent, of the colour of a freshly-formed cloud, wearing yellow silk, two-armed, beautiful, pure, and smiling, in the company of his own Shakti, Kundalinî. Again, in the fourth chapter of the same book, the author uses the terminology of the Tantra Shâstra when he says, "Lakshmîrmâyâ Kâmavîjam," etc.,[4] and thus introduces the great mantra of Shrî Krishna, consisting of vîjas, and formed of eight syllables. All are aware that the piercing of the six Chakras, their names, and the Devî Kundalinî are matters of the Tantra Shâstra. There are references to Tântrik prânâyâma in the Pâtanjala Darshana and in the Bhagavadgîtâ, and other places of the Mahâbhârata.[5] It should also be pointed out here that there is indirect, though not direct, reference to the Tantra Shâstra in Yudhishthira's question to Bhîshma contained in the 7th, 8th, and 9th shlokas of the 259th chapter in the Shânti Parva of the Mahâbhârata, dealing with Mokshadharma. These shlokas may be translated as follows:

"I have heard that Vaidik ordinances are gradually coming into disuse, in the progress of ages. There is one form of dharma for the Satya age, another for the Tretâ age, another for the Dvâpara age, and

[1] The planet Jupiter. [2] The ascending node.
[3] Devoted to Bhagavân.
[4] Lakshmi, Mâyâ and Kâma Vîjas.
[5] Shânti Parva, chap. cci., shlokas 17 and 19, with Nîlakantha's note.

another again for the Kali age; The Vedas contemplate different forms of dharma according to different capacities of men. The words of the Vedas are true, and from these words, again, have emanated all-embracing Vedas," and so forth. Now, here it may be asked, what are these all-embracing Vedas which have emanated from the Vedas? In the Mahâmahopâdhyâya's opinion no other reply is possible but that the Tantras are here referred to. Smritis also, like the Vedas, do not give to all castes equal adhikâra (right) to them, and prohibit their study to Shudras. The "all-embracing Vedas," therefore, cannot mean Smritis. The Tantras give adhikâra to people belonging to all castes, so that they alone are "all-embracing." Moreover, there is no instance of the word Veda being used in the sense of Smriti. There is, however, ample use of the terms Âgama and Nigama in the sense of the Tantras—terms which originally meant the Vedas. Just as, according to the Shâstra, the Vedas have no author, but are merely remembered by four-headed Brahmâ, so the Tantras also have not, according to the Shâstra, any author, but have merely emanated from the mouths of Shiva. Neither the Vedas nor the Tantras have emanated from the mouths of munis, rishis, or the spiritually wise (jnânî). Brahmâ is Îshvara and Shiva also is Îshvara, and the Shâstra says that the Vedas emanate from the mouths of the former, and the Tantras have issued from those of the latter. More explicit are the shlokas 121, 122, 123, and 124 of chapter ccxxxiv. in the Shânti Parva of the Mahabhârata dealing with Mokshadharma. Here Mahâdeva says to Daksha: "Extracting from the Vedas complete with their six angas (limbs), and from the Sânkhya-Yoga, I promulgated the Pâshupata vrata with such austere and extensive tapas as no Deva, or Dânava could perform. This vrata is superior to all practices ordained in the Vedas and other Shastras, all-good, beneficial to all castes and âshramas,[1] everlasting,

[1] It is open to all, which the Veda is not.

performed in three years and ten days,[1] secret, highly spoken of by wise men, spoken ill of by fools; opposed (viparîtam) in some matters to Varnâshramadharma,[2] though in many others similar thereto; prescribed by learned men; practised by men who have risen superior to Âshramas,[3] and beneficial. Daksha, you will obtain all the fruits of such Pâshupata vrata," and so forth. To what Shâstra, the Pandit asks, other than the Tantra Shâstra, can this Pâshupata vrata belong? It cannot be the Vedas, for the vrata is said to have been extracted from them. Again, the reader will, he thinks, be astonished to know that the Mahâbhârata has adopted the Tântrik terminology and Tântrik methods in the introduction of mantras. In the 74th shloka of chapter cclxxxiv. of the Shânti Parva referred to above, the following mantra occurs:

"Ghantî charu chelî milî milî brahma kâyikamagnînâm."[4]

[1] Quaere. The text I have before me runs, Abdair dashârddha sangyuktam, which, according to Nîlakantha, means that it may be acquired in years or shortly by the merit of those who practise the five yamas and five niyamas. Some read "dashâha" (ten days) for "dashârddha." There seems to be no reason for limiting the period of the vrata thus.

[2] Thus there is no caste in the chakra; the smârta vratas, such as fasting, are not generally observed; pûjâ in Vâmâchâra is done at night and other matters.

[3] Paramahangsas, parivrâjakas, etc.

[4] The full verse is—

"Ghanto'ghanto ghatî ghantî charu chelî milî milî
Brahma kâyikamagnînâng dandimundastridandadhrik."

The meaning of which is as follows: Ghantah=prakâshavân, or shining—that is, Pûrnabrahmasvarûpah. Aghantah=Mâyâvritatvena prachchhannaprakâsha—viz., that whose shining is concealed on account of its being covered with mâyâ or jîva. Ghatî=he who ghatayati (joins) men with the fruit of their karma, or who attaches fruit to the karma of men. Ghantî=ghantavân, or possessor of ghantah (*q.v.*). Charu= those who move (charanti)—that is, jîvas movable and immovable men, animals, trees, etc. Chelî=player; as men play with birds, so Shiva plays with us. Milî=one who has mila (attachment). Shiva as

Nîlakantha explains this mantra as follows:

"Ghantî = Om. The word 'Rudra' must be introduced. Agnînâm kâyikam = the wife of Fire, or Svâhâ; Brahma = Om. Thus the following mantra, containing eighteen syllables, has been here quoted: Ong Rudra chelî chelî chelî chelî milî milî Ong Svâhâ."[1] In the 379th shloka of chapter xiv. of the Anushâsana Parva, Shrî Krishna says to Yudhishthira: "Eight days passed as though they were but a moment, and I took mantra from that Brâhmana (Upamanyu)." After this verse it is narrated how Shrî Krishna performed austere tapasyâ in the worship of Shiva by repeating this mantra; how Shiva, being pleased, appeared before him in the company of Umâ: how the hymn sung by Shrî Krishna pleased Shiva and Umâ, so that they granted him blessings and so forth. One is therefore astonished to hear some educated persons say that nowhere in the Mahâbhârata is there any mention of Shakti save in the Virâta Parva, where Yudhishthira hymns Durgâ. In the story of Daksha's yajna, related in the Mahâbhârata, there is no mention of the death of Daksha's daughter,[2] but it is said that Bhadrakâlî rose out of Her body for the destruction of the yajna,[3] and that pleased by the hymn sung by Daksha, Durgâ appeared with Mahâdeva before him, and then disappeared. Amongst the thousand names spoken

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the cause is attached to, or, as we should say, in, all effects. The word is mentioned twice for emphasis. Brahma = Pranava. Kâyikamagnînâm = the spouse of Fire, or Svâhâ. Dandimunda = ascetics, paramahangsas, etc. Tridandadhrik = holding the three staffs of bael, palâsha and bamboo, as is done in Upanayana. These staffs are thrown into the Ganges on the twelfth day following Upanayana. Shiva is thus Purnabrahman; Jîva; the Giver of the fruit of Karma; the all-brilliant One; all-moving Jîvas: He who plays with Jîva; who as all Causes is in all effects; Pranava; and Svâhâ; the ascetic and Grihastha life.

[1] This is according to the Gauras who say that Ghantî = Om; and insert Rudra in the vocative case, and repeat chelî four times.

[2] Satî.

[3] Shânti Parva, chapter cc.xxc.iv., shlokas 32 and 54.

of by Krishna in the Anushâsana Parva there appear "Vâmadeva, and Vâma, and Prâk, and Dakshina, and Vâmana," and "author of the Vedas and author of Mantras." Mantras here cannot be said to refer to Vaidik mantras owing to the distinction made between the author of the Vedas and the author of mantras, and Nîlakantha, the commentator, in fact, explains mantras as Tântrik mantras. By Vâma and Dakshina are meant (the Pandit thinks) the vâma and the dakshina âchâras in Tantra. Tântrik Vîja mantras are known to many. In the Anushâsana Parva also, where mokshadharma is treated of, it is said: "Four-mouthed Mahâlinga and Chârulinga etc., ruler of vîjas, author of vîjas," and so forth. There are even more explicit references to the Tantra Shâstra in the Mahâbhârata. For instance, it is said, "O Râjârshi[1] the Sânkhya Yoga, the Pancharâtra, the Vedas, and the Pâshupata, know these Shâstras, the purpose of which is to establish jnâna," and, again: "Shrîkantha Shiva, husband of Umâ and lord of all things, promulgated the Pâshupata Jnânashâstra when in placid mood. Bhagavân Himself is the Knower of the entire Pancharâtra."[2] Sanskrit scholars in India, according to the Pandit, believe the Pancharâtra to be a Tantra. Again, the injunction that in the Kali age people should worship Îshvara in the manner prescribed in the Tantra Shâstra leads many people to think that the Tantras are recent because they are intended for the Kali age. The Pandit replies that the Mahâbhârata itself answers this view in the Shânti Parva, where it is said that in the Satya age Rudra, engrossed in yoga, told the Tantra Shâstra to Bâlakhilya[3] Rishis; but that subsequently it again disappeared through the mâyâ of that

[1] Rishi and King.

[2] Shânti Parva, chap. ccc.ixl., shlokas 64 to 68.

[3] Small Rishes the size of a thumb (angushtha), 60,000 in number. Mârkandeya Purâna says they are children of the wife of Kratu and Urdharetas. It is believed that they still appear, and bathe on Pausha Sankrânti Day at Gangâsâgara.

Deva.[1] In the 17th shloka of Chapter cclxvii.[2] of the Shânti Parva, Maharshi Kapila questions Syûmarashmi as follows: "Tell me if you have seen any Shâstra other than Âgama." In reply Syûmarashmi speaks of many things, and at the end of each statement he remarks: "This is Shruti." The Pandit then asks what is meant by the word Âgama in Maharshi Kapila's question. In his Commentary on the Shârîraka Sutra, "owing to the impossibility of generation," Bhagavân Shangkarâchârya refers to the fourfold division of Vâsudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha[3] as stated in the Pancharâtra, and whilst he does not attempt to disprove it, he does disprove the theory of the generation of Sankarshana from Vâsudeva advanced by the followers of the Pancharâtra. Again, in his Commentary on the Sûtra: "The Lord cannot be merely the instrumental cause on account of the existence of diversity in creation," he writes: "Mâheshvaras, too, admit it," "All this was taught by Pashupati, who is Îshvara, for undoing the bonds of pashus," etc. In his Shrîbhâshya on the first Sûtra quoted above, Râmânuja Svâmî writes, "Elucidated by Nârâyana Himself in the Pancharâtra Tantra," and, again, "Non-vedic practices are opposed, and not the cults of Yoga and Pashupati; for Sângkhya, Yoga, Pancharâtra, the Vedas and Pâshupata, are self-evident, and cannot be disproved by reasoning," and so forth. Râmânuja Svâmî quotes as evidence all the passages of the Mahâbhârata above mentioned, as well as many other passages from the same epic, and other works. There is a scripture named Sûtasanghitâ, of which the Brahmagîtâ is a portion. Its speaker is Brahmâ, and throughout it deals with Shangkara. Its annotator is Mâdhavâchârya himself, the writer on all Darshanas, and

[1] Shânti Parva, chap. ccc.xl.viii., see shlokas 17 and 18. The reference should be to chap. 349.

[2] This should be chap. cclxviii.

[3] Vâsudeva = Paramâtmâ; Sankarshana = Jiva; Pradyumna = Manas; Aniruddha = Ahangkâra.

commentator of the Vedas. At the end of every Chapter he writes: "By Mâdhavâchârya, an inhabitant of Kâshî, a devotee of the Shakti of action, a server of the lotus-feet of the three-eyed Deva and illuminator of the path of Upanishad." Here Mâdhavâchârya calls himself a devotee of the Shakti of work (Kriyâshakti), but the Tantra alone deals with Shakti of will, Shakti of knowledge, and Shaktî of action. Not only in the Mahâbhârata, but in all Purânas the greatness of the Devî, as extolled in the Tantras, has been described either shortly or with elaboration. In the account of the greatness of Rudra contained in the Varâha Purâna it is said: "Shangkara has as many aspects as there are Mahâshaktis. He who worships Her ever worships Him as husband." Again: "If he who worships the Devîs pleases Rudra also, these Devîs become for ever siddha to that Mantrin. There is no doubt of this."[1] What is there in the Tantras, it is asked, more than what this verse says? In the Shangkara-Sanghitâ, which forms a part of the Skanda Purâna, the Rishis ask Sûta, "Bhagavân, we desire to hear of the system of Vîramaheshvara," and so forth. And Kârtikeya says to Mahâdeva: "There are few who know Shaiva-Âgama." Shangkara, in His reply, says: "The essence of the Vedas, the Âgama, and the Purânas charms the mind and should be kept secret."[2] According to the Mahâmahopâdhyâya, Shaiva-Âgama undoubtedly means the Tantra-shâstra,[3] as does the word Âgama in the expression "the Vedas, the Âgama, and the Purânas," because it is mentioned separately from the Vedas. There are many Upanishads other than the ten on which Shangkarâchârya wrote his Commentary He selected these ten because they supported his monistic theories. Just as there was no necessity to write a Commentary on the Vedas, so it was not necessary that he should write commentaries on the Upanishads which

[1] Varâha Purâna, chap. xxci.
[2] Chapter xxc
[3] *Vide ante.*

dealt with the methods of worship (upâsanâ). The Akshamâlikâ Upanishad enumerates the substances which should be used for the rosary with which japa[1] is done. They are coral, pearl, crystal, conch, silver, gold, sandalwood, putrajîvikâ, lotus-seed, and rudrâksha. The Tantra Shâstra mentions exactly the same substances. There are many Upanishads of the Atharva Veda, such as Atharvashikhâ, Atharvashirah, Advayatâraka, Adhyâtma, Annapûrnâ, Amritanâda, Amritavindu, Avyakta, Krishna, Kaula, Kshurikâ, Ganapati, Kâtyâyana, Kâlâgnirudra, Kundikâ, Tripurâ-tâpanîya, Dakshinâmûrti, Devîdvaya, Dhyânavindu, Nâdavindu, Nârada, Nârâyana, Nirvâna, Nrisingha-tâpanîya, Pâshupata, Brahma-paingala, Paippalâda, Vahvricha, Vrihajjâvâla, Bhasma, Muktikâ, Rahasya, Râma-tâpanî, Vajra-panjara, Varâha, Vâsudeva, Sarasvatî-rahasya, Sîtâ, Sudarshana, Hayagrīva, etc.[2] As there are 21 recensions of the Rigveda, 109 of the Yajurveda, and 1,000 of the Sâmaveda, so there are the same number of Upanishads belonging to each of the Vedas respectively. The Sânskrit-knowing reader will have surmised from the names of the Upanishads above enumerated that each of them deals with forms of worship similar to that prescribed by the Tantra. There are many commentaries on the Nrisinghatâpanîya Upanishad, one of which is written by Bhagavân Shangkarâchârya and another by his great guru Gauḍapâdâchârya, known by the name of Munîndra. There is, therefore, no ground, it is contended, for the supposition that this Upanishad may be a spurious one. Kulluka Bhatta, the author of the most authoritative commentary on the Manu Sanghita, has, in his note on the first shloka of Chapter ii. of the book, quoted a passage from Hârîta's work, which says: "Now we shall explain dharma. Dharma is based on the authority of

1 See Introduction, Mahânirvâna Tantra.

2 See Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit MSS. in the Government Oriental MSS. Library, Madras, vol. i., part iii.

Shruti. Shruti is of two kinds—Vaidik and Tântrik." From this it is evident that the Tantra Shâstra is nothing else than a part of the Vedas, and is, consequently, known by the names of Âgama and Nigama. The passages above quoted from the Mahâbhârata prove that Mahâdeva first promulgated the Vedas, and then the Pâshupata dharma from a part of it. Thus, from the statement also made by Mahâdeva Himself, we learn that the Tantra Shâstra is a part of the Vedas.

According to the Pandit, the Tantra Shâstra is referred to by the word "rahasya" (mystery), used over and above the expression "All the Vedas," in the 165th shloka of chapter ii. of the Manu Sanghitâ, and also by the word "vidyâ," which is used in addition to the Vedas and the Upanishads in the 10th sûkta of the 4th Brâhmana in the 2nd varga of the Brihadâranyaka Upanishad. The Vriddhahârîtasanghitâ contains a full account of the Tântrik form of initiation (dîkshâ). The Ushanah-sanghitâ makes clear references to the Pancharâtra and the Pâshupata dharma. The Kâtyâyana Sanghitâ ordains worship of Ganesha, Gaurî, and other Devas and Devîs. The Vyâsa Sanghitâ recommends japa of the guhyavidyâ,[1] use of rosaries, with beads of crystal and the like, and worship of Rudra with Gâyatrî. No-where else but in the Tantra Shâstra is there a Gâyatrî for Rudra or any other Devatâ. The Shangkha Sanghitâ says that after dhyâna of a Devatâ, japa should be made with a rosary of crystal or other beads, the number of recitations being recorded by the fingers of the left hand. In the Vriddhagautamasanghitâ there is a list of the names of the authors of Dharma Shâstras. In this list there occur the names of Brahmâ, as also those of Umâ and Maheshvara. It is unnecessary, in the Pandit's opinion, to further quote passages or to cite more authorities. Like the Purânas, all Smriti, and Sanghitâs contain references, direct as well as indirect, to the

[1] Secret Mantra.

Tantra Shâstra, but the Tantra Shâstra makes no reference to either Smriti or Purâna. This also proves the great antiquity of Tantra Shâstra. There is a Tântrik scripture named Shivâgama containing Sûtras which have been quoted as authorities by Krishnânanda in his Tantrasâra. Its commentator is Abhinavagupta, the Court pandit of Gonardda, King of Kashmir. Gonardda died the death of a hero in the great war of Kurukshetra.[1]

We need not here follow the Pandit in his speculations as to Buddhistic influences in Ancient America as established by Mexican architecture, or as to the similarity of the ritual of Ancient Egypt[2] to that of the Tantra, beyond stating that in his opinion such speculations support the more direct inferences derivable from the study of Indian history and literature as to the antiquity of the Tantra Shâstra, which his essay is written to prove. The learned Mahâmahopâdhyâya concludes with the expression of a doubt whether the reasons and arguments he adduces will appeal to "the great men, free of all prejudice, learned in Western language and science, with intellects brightened, sharpened, and coloured by Western philosophy," and apologizes for himself, with perhaps some latent sarcasm, as follows: "I had not the good fortune of learning deductive and inductive logic. In the Chatuspâthi of a native Brâhmana Pandit, I learnt to argue 'whether sound follows the fall of a palm-fruit or precedes it,'" though he says it must not be supposed that other great logicians were mainly engaged in discussions of the "palm-fruit-falling" nature.

Western writers and Indians influenced by their works and general outlook are much occupied with this question of the antiquity and date of the Tantra. To the orthodox

[1] See the Râjataranginî of Kashmir, and the Commentary on Shivâgama, of which there is a copy in the Library of the Mahârâja of Darbhânga.

[2] He points out with regard to Horus, one of the Egyptian Devatâs, that Aharpati (Lord of the Day) and Aharîsha (Ruler of the Day) are Sanskrit epithets of the sun.

all Shâstra is eternal. Moreover, to the Indian temperament, as one of them has well said, sugar is prized for its sweetness without regard to the land whence it came or the cultivator by whom it was grown. It can hardly be said that we have the necessary materials for final judgment from the purely historical standpoint. If it be alleged that Indians have sometimes gone to opposite extremes, European critics and their Indian followers have, as a general rule, displayed almost a mania for belittling the antiquity of Indian religions, literature, and art. In coming to any conclusion on this matter, it is necessary first to inquire into the different elements of doctrine and practice, to distinguish what is original from what is alleged to be an accretion, or interpolation, and to consider the allegation of non-Aryan influences and so forth. It is necessary also to distinguish between Tântrik doctrine and practice so ascertained from its expression or record in any particular document. The latter may be of yesterday, and yet its subjects may be of the ages. Some would derive the Tantra from Mahâyâna Buddhism. Others contend that the Mahâyâna school appears to have adopted the doctrines of the Indian Tantra, which is in notable respects opposed to the original doctrines of the Buddha. The influence of his teachings are rather, it is said, to be found amongst the Vaishnavas, who have in their number many cryptic Buddhists, than in forms of worship which, not to mention other salient differences, prescribe the sacrifice of animals with elaborate rituals before the images of Devas and Devis. In fact, the Lalitavistara[1] already cited represents Shâkyasingha as condemning the "fools" who make obeisance to numerous Devatâ and who perform tapasyâ in the cremation grounds and at the crossing of four roads, as also the practice of "sinful men and heretics (pâshan-

[1] Chap. xvii., using that work, not historically, but as an indication of a Buddhist view of a Shâstra which some would derive from Buddhism.

das)" who use wine and flesh, he having prescribed the ascetic life and the avoidance of injury (whether by sacrifice or otherwise) to all beings. Professor Masaharu Anezaki,[1] after citing the Râjataranginî as evidence of Tântrik worship at the time of Asoka (240 B.C.),[2] says that without a doubt the Tantra began to develop even before Nâgârjuna (A.D. 200), and that in absorbing Buddhism it has been successful despite all efforts to the contrary. In fact, as regards Buddhism, the Tantra, according to this view, stands for a Hindu conquest. How far, as some allege, the conquering doctrine has been itself subjected to non-Aryan influences is another question. Some contend that here, as in most things, there is some truth in both contentions and that Indian and Buddhist thought are likely to have influenced one another. Such may think that the influence of the latter has predominated as regards certain Tântrik schools and rituals. It is thus noteworthy that the Târâ Tantra, which is said by some to belong to the northern tradition, states that Buddha and Vashishtha were Tântrika munis and Kula Bhairavas.[3] According to the Rudrayâmala, the worship of Târâ was introduced from Mahâchina in the Himâlayas by Vashishtha, who worshipped the Devî Buddhishvarî, according to one of the Shâkhâs of the Atharvaveda. The solution may possibly be found in a more perfect knowledge of the various traditions, which are said by some to have existed, than we now possess.

Whatever be the date of the first appearance of specifically Tântrik doctrines, which, owing to the progressive nature of its developments, may never be ascertained, it will be probably found, upon a profounder inquiry into the subject than has been hitherto made, that the

1 "History of the Religions in Ancient India."

2 I cite the author's views without myself expressing an opinion on the evidential value of the particular work cited.

3 See A. K. Maitra's Introduction to this Tantra published by the Varendra Anusandhâna Samiti.

antiquity of the Tantra has been much under-estimated. This, however, does not mean that all the current Tantras, or all their contents, are of great antiquity. The contrary is, I believe, the fact. The Meru Tantra,[1] in a curious shloka, says: "There will be born at London English folk whose mantra[2] for worship is in the Phiranga[3] language, who will be undefeated in battle and Lords of the world."[4] Whatever be the age of this Tantra, it may be argued that this passage at least was probably not written earlier than the eighteenth century.

Comparatively modern Tantras may, however, be based on older versions now lost.[5] On the orthodox hypothesis, moreover, there is no reason why new Shâstras should not even now appear in the world. The work of Shiva has not come to an end with the inception of the Kaliyuga. In this, as in other matters, Indian tradition, when rightly understood, may perhaps be found to largely justify itself. The following remarks of Professor Hayman Wilson have a bearing on this point, both on the general question of the antiquity of the Hindu Shâstras and that of the Tantra, if, as is commonly done, the date of the latter is to be fixed with reference to the alleged date of the Paurânik period, which, according to general European views, precedes them: "It is therefore as idle as it is irrational to dispute the antiquity or authenticity of the greater portion of the contents of the Purânas in the face of abundant positive and circum-

1 Twenty-third Prakâsha.

2 That is, unlike some defiled (mlechcha) countries, it is not without a religion of its own.

3 Here English. The term, which is ordinarily derived from "Frank," is applicable to the European peoples generally. Its meaning, however, according to the Shabdakalpadruma, is "those addicted to sin and anger." It is also used, as a qualificative of disease, to denote syphilis, because of the prevalence of the disease in Europe.

4 Phirangabhâshayâ mantrâsteshângsangsâdhanâdbhuvi
Adhipâmandalânâncha sangrâmeshvaparâjitâh
Ingrejânavashatpancha landrajâshchâpi bhâvinah.

5 See also what the author of the Tantratattva says at p. 393, *post*.

stantial evidence of the prevalence of the doctrines which they teach, the currency of the legends which they narrate, and the integrity of the institutions which they describe at least three centuries before the Christian Era. But the origin and development of these doctrines, traditions, and institutions were not the work of a day, and the testimony which establishes their existence three centuries before Christianity carries it back to a much more remote antiquity—to an antiquity that is probably not surpassed by any of the prevailing fictions, institutions, or beliefs of the ancient world."[1]

The Tantras are generally cast in the form of dialogues between Shiva and his Shakti Pârvatî, the form in which Satî, His Spouse, reappeared after her death at Daksha's sacrifice, or in their forms as Bhairava and Bhairavî. Shiva is called Âdinâtha, the first Guru. But he is also Shakti, for He and the Devî are one.[2] The Devî is therefore included with him in the circle of Gurus. Sadâshiva, as the Mahâsvachanda Tantra states, promulgates as both guru and shishya (disciple), the Tantras in the form of question and answer, by the division of his real and manifested forms (prakâsha and vimarsha). Where the questioning is by the Devî as shishya and the answers are given by Shiva as guru, the Tantra is in the form called Âgama. Where the Devî is the teacher, as in the Nigamakalpadruma and other Nigamas,[3] the Shâstra is known as a Nigama. Both terms are derived from the *italicized* letters of the Sanskrit verses which occur in the Âgamadvaitanirnaya,[4] and which run: "An

[1] Vishnu Purâna, xcix.

[2] Mahânirvâna Tantra, chap. i., verses 14-16. Mamarûpâsidevitvam nabhedo'ste tvayâmama ; for in their ultimate ground both Purusha and Shakti are one.

[3] It is noteworthy that the Nigamas appear to deal largely with the Rahasyapūjā.

[4] *Â*gatang Shambhuvaktrebyah
*ga*tancha girijâ mukhe
*ma*tancha vâsudevena
tasmâdâgama uchyate

Âgama is so called because it proceeds from the mouth of Shambhu[1] and goes to Girijâ,[2] being approved by Vâsudeva.[3] Nigama is so described because it emanates from the mouth of Girijâ to enter the ear of Girisha,[4] being approved by Vâsudeva." The seven marks or topics of an Âgama are said by the Vârâhî Tantra to be shristi, pralaya, devatânâmârchanam, sâdhana, purascharana, shatkarma, and dhyânayoga.

Shrishtishcha pralayashchaiva devatânâng yathârch-
chanam
Sâdhanangchaiva sarveshâng purashcharanameva cha,
Shatkarmmasâdhanangchaiva dhyânayogashchatur-
vvidhah.
Saptabhirlakshanairyuktamâgamamtadbidurbudhâh.[5]

The same and other Tantras describe the subject (lakshana) of such a Shâstra to be : The Supreme Spirit, the creation and destruction of the universe, the origin and worship of the Devas, classification of beings (bhûtânâng sangsthânam), the heavenly bodies, description of the worlds and hells, of man and woman, and of the centres (chakra) of the human body, the law and duty (dharma) of the different ages and of the stages of life in the individual called âshrama, the sacraments (sang-

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*Ni*rgato girijâ vaktrât
*ga*tascha girishashrutrim
*ma*tashcha vâsudevasya
nigamah parikathyate.

1 Shiva.

2 The mountain-born Devî, His Spouse.

3 Vishnu. The above is the special meaning of these two terms, which both also denote the Veda. See as to Nigama, Shrīmadbhâgavata Skandha, chap. v., verse 39.

4 Shiva.

5 That is, creation and destruction of the universe, the worship of Devas, spiritual exercises, the rite called purascharana, the six "magical" powers called Shatkarma (viz., mâranam, uchchâtanam, vashikaranam, stambhanam, vidveshanam, svastyayanam), and the form of Yoga, so called.

skâras), the consecration of images of Devatâ, mantra, yantra,[1] mudrâ,[2] all forms of spiritual training (sâdhana), and worship (pûjâ, upâsana), whether external or mental, including worship with the panchatattva,[3] consecration of houses, tanks, wells, trees, etc., descriptions of holy shrines (tîrtha), purascharana,[4] japa, vrata[5] shatkarmasâdhana,[6] and all forms of ceremonial rites and "magic," meditation (dhyâna), and yoga, the duties of kings, law, custom, medicine, and science generally.

The Tantras, in fact, were (for they exist only in fragment) encyclopædias of the knowledge of their time.

The Tantras are still very numerous, though the greater part has been lost, destroyed, or is missing. Of those which are known, only a portion have been printed, and of these last the versions in circulation are sometimes incomplete. Thus the current version of the Mahânirvâna lacks the second part, which is double the extent of the first. This latter part has been long supposed missing.[7] On the other hand, the first part of the Rudrayâmala[8] is at

[1] Is the diagram for worship by which the mind is fixed on its object. The cover of this work bears the imprint of the Shrî yantra and the back of the title-page of the Gâyatrî yantra. The back of the last page contains a Kâlî yantra. Yantra is Mantra in the sense that it is the body of the Devatâ who is Mantra. Yantram mantramayam proktam mantrâtmâ devataiva hi. Dehâtmanoryathâ bhedo yantradevatayostathâ (Kaulâvalîya Tantra). As to this and Mantra, see Introduction to my edition of the Mahânirvâna Tantra.

[2] Gestures made by the hands and positions of the body employed in worship and hathayoga. Devânâm modadâ mudrâ tasmâttâng yatnatashcharet.

[3] Wine, meat, fish, grain, woman (maithuna), both in their literal, substitutional, and esoteric meanings, for the Tattva are of three kinds. See Introduction to my edition of the Mahânirvâna Tantra.

[4] *Vide ante.*

[5] Japa is recitation, either external or mental, of mantras, according to certain rules (viddhânena mantrochchâranam). Vratam is a part of naimittikam or occasional karma, such as those of the Janmâstami, Shivarâtri, Durgâpujâ, etc.

[6] *Vide ante.*

[7] It exists, however, and I hope to publish it in my collection of Tântrik Texts.

[8] Certain Tântrik Shâstras are called Yâmalas and Dâmaras, such as the Yâmala, Siddhi-Yâmala, Rudra-Yâmala, Brâhma-Yâmala, and

present not found, though fragments may exist, such as the Mantrâbhidhâna, which is reputed to belong to that part, and which I have published.[1] The Sâradâtilaka, a Tântrik compendium which is much esteemed in Orissa, contains more matter than is to be found in the current printed versions known to me,[2] as is also the case with the current Vîjakosha. Other Tantras appear to exist in defective or mutilated copies only.

According to the Tantras, there are three regions called Vishnukrântâ, Rathakrântâ, and Ashvakrântâ (sometimes called Gajakrântâ) respectively, to which different Tantras are assigned. According to the Shaktimangala Tantra, Vishnukrântâ extends from the Vindhya Mountain to Chattala (Chittagong), thus including Bengal; the Rathakrântâ from the same place to Mahâchina, including Nepal; and Ashvakrântâ, from the same mountain to "the great ocean," apparently including the rest of India. The Mahâsiddhasâra Tantra agrees with this as to Vishnukrântâ and Rathakrântâ, but makes the Ashvakrântâ extend from the Karatoya River[3] (in the Dinajpur District) to Java.

the Bhûta Dâmara, Deva Dâmara, Yaksha Dâmara. The writer of an article in vol. v. of the "Asiatic Researches," pp. 53-67 (Calcutta, 1798), says: "I am informed that the Tantras collectively are noticed in very ancient compositions; but as they are very numerous they must have been composed at different periods. It may be presumed that the Rudrayâmala is amongst the most ancient, as it is noticed in the Durgâ Mahattva, where the principal Tantras are noticed as 'Kâlî, Mundamâlâ, Târâ, Nirvâna (not the Mahânirvâna), Sarvasâsana, Bîra, Lingârchana, Bhûta, Uddâsana, Kâlikâ, Bhairavî, Bhairavîkalpa, Todala, Mâtribhedanaka, Mâyâ, Bîresvara, Visvasâra, Samâja, Brahmayâmala, Rudrayâmala, Sunkuyâmala, Gayatrî, Kâlikâkâla, Sarvasva, Kulârnava, Yoginî, Mahishamardinî. These are universally known, Oh Bhairavi, greatest of souls: and many are the Tantras uttered by Shambhu (Shiva)."

1 Vol. i. of my Tântrik Texts.

2 I have come across what appears to be a complete manuscript in Puri.

3 A very sacred river which is notable in this—that it never loses its sanctity. All others do so in the month of Shrabun (July-August).

The following Tantras are assigned[1] to the several regions, though there are differences of opinion as regards particular Tantras. Thus, in the first list some would exclude the Tantrântara and include the Yogârnava. Some Tantras appear in more than one of these lists.

The Tantras of the Vishnukrântâ are said to be: 1. Siddhîshvara, 2. Kâlîtantra, 3. Kulârnava, 4. Jnânârnava, 5. Nîlatantra, 6. Phetkârî, 7. Devyâgama, 8. Uttara, 9. Shrîkrama, 10. Siddhiyâmala, 11. Matsyasûkta, 12. Siddhasâra, 13. Siddhisârasvata, 14. Vârâhî, 15. Yoginî, 16. Ganeshavimarshinî, 17. Nityâ-tantra, 18. Shivâgama, 19. Châmundâ, 20. Mundamâlâ, 21. Hangsa-Maheshvara, 22. Niruttara, 23. Kulaprakâshaka, 24. Devîkalpa, 25. Gandharva, 26. Kriyâsâra, 27. Nibandha, 28. Svatantra, 29. Sammohana, 30. Tantra-râja, 31. Lalitâ, 32. Râdhâ, 33. Mâlinî, 34. Rudrayâmala, 35. Brihat-Shrîkrama, 36. Gavâksha, 37. Sukumudinî, 38. Vishuddheshvara, 39. Mâlinî-vijaya, 40. Samayâchâra, 41. Bhairavî, 42. Yoginî-hridaya, 43. Bhairava, 44. Sanatkumâra, 45. Yoni, 46. Tantrântara, 47. Navaratneshvara, 48. Kulachûdâmani, 49. Bhâvachûdâmani, 50. Devaprakâsha, 51. Kâmâkhyâ, 52. Kâmadhenu, 53. Kumârî, 54. Bhûtadâmara, 55. Yâmala, 56. Brahmayâmala, 57. Vishvasâra, 58. Mahâkâla, 59. Kuloddîsha, 60. Kulâmrita, 61. Kubjikâ, 62. Tantrachintâmani, 63. Kâlîvilâsa, 64. Mâyâtantra.

The following are given as Rathakrântâ Tantras: 1. Chinmaya, 2. Matsya-sukta, 3. Mahishamarddinî, 4. Mâtrikodaya, 5. Hangsa Maheshvara, 6. Meru-tantra, 7. Mahânîla, 8. Mahâ-nirvâna, 9. Bhûtadâmara, 10. Deva-dâmara, 11. Vîjachintâmani, 12. Ekajatâ, 13. Vâsudeva-rahasya, 14. Brihadgautamîya, 15. Varnoddhriti, 16. Chhâyânîla, 17. Brihadyoni, 18. Brahma-

[1] See Sâdhanakalpalatikâ, by Nilmani Mukhopadhyaya, part ii., pp. 22-26; and Introduction to Vol. I. of my "Tântrik Texts." As to other Tântrik works, see pp. 390-392, *post*.

jnâna, 19. Gâruda, 20. Varna-vilâsa, 21. Bâlâ-vilâsa. 22. Purashcharanachandrikâ, 23. Purashcharana-rasollâsa, 24. Panchadashî, 25. Pichchhilâ, 26. Prapanchasâra, 27. Parameshvara, 28. Navaratneshvara, 29. Nâradîya, 30. Nâgârjuna, 31. Yogasâra, 32. Dakshina-murti, 33. Yoga-svarodaya, 34. Yakshinîtantra, 35. Svarodaya, 36. Jnâna-bhairava, 37. Akâsha-bhairava, 38. Râjarâjeshvarî, 39. Revati, 40. Sârasa, 41. Indra-jâla, 42. Krikalâsa-dîpika, 43. Kangkâlamâlinî, 44. Kâlottama, 45. Yakshadâmara, 46. Sarasvatî, 47. Sâradâ, 48. Shakti-sanggama, 49. Shaktikâgamasarvasva, 50. Sammohinî, 51. Âchâra-sâra, 52. Chînâchâra, 53. Shadâmnâya, 54. Karâlabhairava, 55. Shodha, 56. Mahâlakshmî, 57. Kaivalya, 58. Kulasadbhâva, 59. Siddhi-taddhari, 60. Kritisâra, 61. Kâla-bhairava, 62. Uddâmareshvara, 63. Mahâ-kala, 64. Bhûta-bhairava.

The Tantras of Ashvakrântâ are given as follows: 1. Bhûta-Shuddhi, 2. Guptadîkshâ, 3. Brihatsâra, 4. Tattvasâra, 5. Varnasâra, 6. Kriyâsâra, 7. Gupta-tantra, 8. Gupta-sâra, 9. Brihat-todala, 10. Brihannirvâna, 11. Brihatkangkâlinî, 12. Siddha-tantra, 13. Kâla-tantra, 14. Shiva-tantra, 15. Sârâtsâra, 16. Gaurîtantra, 17. Yoga-tantra, 18. Darmakatantra, 19. Tattva-chintâmani, 20. Vindutantra, 21. Mahâyoginî, 22. Brihad-yoginî, 23. Shivârchchana, 24. Samvara, 25. Shûlinî, 26. Mahâmâlinî, 27. Moksha, 28. Brihanmâlinî, 29. Mahâ-moksha, 30. Brihanmoksha, 31. Gopîtantra, 32. Bhûtalipi, 33. Kâminî, 34. Mohinî, 35. Mohana, 36. Samîrana, 37. Kâmakeshara, 38. Mahâvîra, 39. Chudâmani, 40. Gurvarchchana, 41. Gopya, 42. Tîkshna, 43. Mangalâ, 44. Kâmaratna, 45. Gopalîlâmrita, 46. Brahmânda, 47. Chîna, 48. Mahâniruttara, 49. Bhuteshvara, 50. Gâyatrî, 51. Vishuddheshvara, 52. Yogârnava, 53. Bherandâ, 54. Mantrachintâmani, 55. Yantrachudâmani, 56. Vidyullatâ, 57. Bhuvaneshvarî, 58. Lîlavatî, 59. Brihachchîna, 60. Kuranja, 61. Jayarâdhâmâdhava, 62. Ujjâsaka, 63. Dhûmâvatî, 64. Shivâ.

Particular Tantras have been from time to time printed,

such as the well-known Mahânirvâna, the Yoginî, Kâli Tantras, and others. The chief collection, however, is that of Babu Rasik Mohun Chatterjee, who has published at Calcutta the following Tantras or Tântrik works in Bengali character: Mundamâla, Shâktakramana, Mâyâ, Bhûtashuddhi, Kaulikârchanadîpikâ, Kubjikâ, Vishvasâra, Purascharanarasollâsa, Shâktânandataranginî, Nîla, Toḍala, Gandharva, Rudrayâmala, Guptasâdhana, Gâyatrî, Fetkârinî, Niruttara, Mahâchînâchârakrama, Nirvânakramadîpikâ, Mantrakosha, Yoginî, Kulârnava, Kâmâkhyâ, Kankâlamâlinî, Mâtrikâbheda, Kâmadhenu, Mahânirvâna (first part), Sanatkumâra, Sâradâtilaka, Tripurasârasamuchaya, Uddâmareshvara, Kaulâvalî, Mantramahodadhi, Vrihannîla, Târârahasyam, Râdhâ, Shyâmârahasya.

A few of these and others have been printed at Calcutta in Devanâgrî and edited by Pandit Jîvânanda Vidyâsâgara—namely, Kulârnava, Târârahasya, Tripurasârasamuchchaya, Mahânirvâna, Yoginî, Rudrayâmala (Uttarabhâga), Shyâmârahasya, Tantras; the Sâradâtilaka, Prânatoshinî, Mantramahodadhi; also a collection of small works on magic (Indrajâla) entitled Indrajâlavidyâsangraha.

Considerable portions of some of the Purânas are appropriated (as Professor Hayman Wilson pointed out as regards the Agni Purâna) to instructions for the performance of religious ceremonies which belong to the Tântrik ritual and are translated from the principal authorities of that system. In fact, a large number of Purânas and Upapurânas contain Tântrik forms of worship, and are on that account and in accordance with the general view of the comparative modernity of the Tantras rejected as "genuine" Purânas, though accepted and relied on as such by the Tântrik pandits. The reader is referred to the introduction of Professor H. H. Wilson's Vishnu Purâna. Reference may be here made to the Kâlikâ, Brahmânda, Garuḍa, Agni, Shrîmadbhâgavata, Devîbhâgavata, and other Purânas. In the twelfth chapter

of the Kurma Purâna, on the other hand, it is said: "The Bhairava, Vâma, Ârhata, and Yâmala Shâstras are intended for delusion."

In addition to the Tantras, there are Tântrik compendia, commentaries and dictionaries, such as the Tantrasâra, Prânatoshinî, Prânakrishnashabdâmbuddhi, Tantrâbhidhâna, or Mantrakosha, and others. Krishnânanda's Tantrasâra is one of those now best known. But before his time there were, as already stated, other compilers, such as Râghavânanda, Râghavabhatta, Virûpâksha, and Govindabhatta; and such works as the Râmârchanachandrikâ, Mantramuktâvalî, Bhuvaneshvarîpârijâta, Sâradâtilakam, Tripurasârasamuchchaya, Svachchandasangraha Sârasamuchchaya, Somabhujangâvalî, and Mantratantraprakâsha.

Controversy has also divided the Âgamas into "good" Âgamas (Sadâgama) and "bad" Âgamas (Asadâgama). Brahmânanda Giri, the author of the celebrated Shâktânandataranginî (Wave of delight for Shâktas), says:[1] "Sadâgama eva âgamashabdasya mukhyatvât" ("Sadâgama alone is Âgama (Tantra) according to the primary meaning of the word Âgama"). Shiva condemns, in the Âgama Sanghitâ,[2] the Asadâgama, saying: "Oh! Deveshi men in the Kali age are generally of a râjasik and tâmasik[3] disposition, and being addicted to forbidden ways deceive many others. Oh! Sureshvarî—those who in disregard of their varnâshramadharmma[4] offer to us flesh, blood, and wine—become bhûtas, pretas, pishâchas, and brahmarâkshasas."[5] It is denied that this passage

1 Chap. ii. 2 Cited in Shâktânandataranginî, chap. ii.

3 That is, of a sensual and ignorant disposition.

4 The law governing caste; and the stages of life, student, householder, etc., called Ashramas. The term as a general one includes the âchâra of the Sâdhaka.

5 That is, unclean, malignant, and demoniac spirits:

Kalau prâyena deveshi râjasastâmasâstathâ,
Nishiddhâcharanâh santo mohayantyaparân bahûn,
Âvâbhyâng pishitang raktang surânchaiva sureshvari,
Varnâshramochitang dharmmamavichâryyârpayanti ye,
Bhutapretapishâchâste bhavanti brahmarâkshasâh.

is any proof that the Tantra prescribing the Panchatattva Sâdhana with wine and so forth is an Asadâgama. That these verses do not, in the opinion of the author of the Shâktânandatarangini, amount to condemnation of this sâdhana is said to be shown by the following passage in the same work in which the previous verses appear. "He who sees wine, fish, meat, woman, should salute the Bhairavî Devî and say: Ong! salutation to the beloved of Shiva, the remover of all obstacles. Salutation to Thee, the giver of all boons, adorned with a garland of severed heads stained with streams of blood. Thee I salute for the destruction of all obstacles and the well-being of Kulâchâra."[1] The meaning of these two passages is therefore said to be that wine, flesh, and so forth, are prohibited in those cases where their use is forbidden by the Âchâra of the particular worshipper, as in the case of the Pashu. This form of worship is not to be followed indiscriminately and without reference to the rules which properly govern it. For in that case instead of being a help to the sâdhaka, it leads him along the downward path. The Asadâgama, in short, is said to be that Âgama which prescribes forbidden acts, that is, acts forbidden by the âchâra of a particular worshipper; not all such rites, but the false rites followed by the bad. Where true worship is the aim there is *sat*, where it is not there is *asat*.

* * * * *

It may be asked, What is the general characteristic of the Tantra as compared with other Shâstras? In the first place the Shâstra contains provisions which are applicable for all without distinction of race, caste, or sex. The Shâstra affords to all, with freedom from Vaidik exclusiveness, the practical method (more extensive than mere ritual in its ordinary English sense) which qualifies the Sâdhaka for the reception of the higher doctrine of the path of knowledge (jnâna mârga). The Shudra and woman are not, as in the case of Vaidikâ-

[1] Chap. xv.

châra, under any ban. As the Gautamîya Tantra says[1] people of all castes, and whether men or women, may receive its mantras "Sarvavarnâdhikârâshcha nârînâm yogyameva cha." In the Chakra there is no caste at all, even the lowest Chandâla[2] being deemed, whilst therein, higher than Brâhmanas. The Mahânirvâna Tantra says:[3] "That low Kaula who refuses to initiate a Chandâla or a Yavana[4] into the Kaula dharma, considering them to be inferior, or a woman, out of disrespect for her, goes the downward way. All two-footed beings in this world, from the vipra[5] to the inferior castes, are competent for kulâchâra."

In the next place, as regards the subject matter in respect of which liberty is so given, it is necessary to understand the distinction which Hindus draw in religious matters between knowledge (jnâna) in the sense of actual experience, as distinguished from mere mental theorizing, and action (kriyâ). The answer, then, is that the Tantra is above all a practical scripture primarily concerned with action and ritual, which the undiscerning may think has, in any case, been prescribed to an excessive extreme. It is so concerned because, though action cannot alone and directly secure liberating knowledge, the attainment of the latter must necessarily be preceded by right action. For how otherwise can such spiritual knowledge be gained? In order to secure the development of the Jîva's body, certain physical exercises are necessary. Similarly both these and other mental and spiritual exercises are required if liberating knowledge (brahmajnâna) is to be attained. Such exercises are generically termed "sâdhana," and include both worship (pûjâ) and all its ritual.

1 Chap. i. 2 One of the lowest and most unclean castes.

3 Chap xiv., verses 187, 184.

4 Here generally used for non-Hindu, a term specially applied to the Greeks or Bactrians. There is nothing, therefore, to prevent a non-Hindu from being initiated in Kaula dharma, provided that he be fit for such initiation. Initiation, however, in such case would ordinarily be given by an avadhûta. 5 Brâhmana.

Sâdhana has historically varied with race and creed. The Hindu has his own in the Tantra which is called the Sâdhana Shâstra. The provision of such a definite training is the strength to a greater or less degree of all ancient orthodoxies, just as its absence may prove to be the rock on which the more modern forms of religion may split. Doubtless to the newer "Protestant" spirit, whether issuing from Europe, Arabia, or elsewhere, all ritual is liable to be regarded as "mummery," except possibly the particular and perhaps jejune variety which it calls its own. For even the most desiccated "Protestantism" has not been able altogether to dispense with it. There is room for this spirit as for others, or it would not be there. Like, however, everything else, it may go beyond the purposes which are claimed to justify its origin.

Etymologists have derived the word "ceremony" from "cor" and "monere." The derivation, though inaccurate, explains well the purpose of the thing itself. The sacred rites which are the expressions of innermost feeling proclaim the religious truths which have inspired them and excite devotion, rendering man more sensible of the Divine Presence. So, as the Council of Trent declared, "the Catholic Church, rich with the experience of ages and clothed with their splendour, has introduced mystic benediction (mantra), incense (dupa), water (âchamana, padya, etc.), lights (dîpa), bells (ghantâ), flowers (pushpa),[1] vestments, and all the magnificence of its ceremonies in order to excite the spirit of religion to the contemplation of the profound mysteries which they reveal. As are its faithful, the Church is composed of both body (deha) and soul (âtmâ). It therefore renders to the Lord (Îshvara) a double worship, exterior (vâhyapûjâ) and interior (mânasapûjâ), the latter being the prayer (vandana) of the faithful, the breviary of its priest, and the voice of Him ever interceding in our favour,

[1] Portions of the Shoḍasha Upachâra of Hindu worship.

and the former the outward motions of the liturgy." The human need for ceremonial in the sense of the necessity which man feels of an exterior manifestation which shall both stimulate and translate his inner feelings, is such that no religion of the past has been without its rites and ceremonies, and even the shallowest of epochs, whilst affecting a superiority to them, have yet preserved these ceremonies in its civil life.

The necessity which is thus admitted exists with greater urgency in the spiritual sphere. It is idle to suppose that all or any may, through Vedântik talk or by the mere closing of the eyes in pious pose realize the Nirguna Brahman. The great teaching of the Vedânta by itself and without accompanying Sâdhana, can achieve nothing of real worth. Its study may produce a Pandit. But to the Sâdhaka the disputations of Pandits, whether philosophical or scientific, is like "the cawing of crows." There is both reason and humour in the Hindu saying that a logician will be reborn a jackass. It is Sâdhana which alone in any system, whether Hindu or otherwise, is really fruitful. The Tantra claims to be practical and to be a pratyaksha Shâstra in that it affords the direct proof of *experience*. It is therefore one of its common sayings that, "Whereas other Shâstras are concerned with speculation only, the art of medicine and Tantra are practical, self-evident, and prove themselves at every step."

The Tantra further claims not only to be practical and to contain provisions available for all without distinction of caste or sex, but also to be fundamentally rational. Nowhere else, in fact, than in the Hindu Shâstras do we find greater stress laid on the necessity of thought and reasoning. For in India it is said want of reasoning involves loss of dharma. "There is no sage who has not an opinion of his own."[1] The virtue of its

[1] Nâsau muniryasya matang na bhinnam, as the Mahâbhârata says.

general method is not merely thaumaturgic,[1] but is inherent in the mental states induced by dhyâna and other physical and mental processes, and the excitation of the exterior rituals; an inherence chiefly explained by the fact that as at base all existence is of the nature of mind, the transformation of mind is the transformation of existence itself. Thus the sacramental energy of the Mantra, even when the Guru (who is himself the manifestation on the terrestrial plane of Âdinâtha Mahâkâla)[2] has vivified it with consciousness (chaitanya), depends in part for its efficacy on the competence (adhikâra) of him who receives it.

Profoundly based on truth, however, as all ritual is, the Tantra yet recognizes that there is a stage in spiritual progress in which it becomes not merely unnecessary, but an obstacle to further advance. If sâdhana be, as it is, but a means to an end (brahmajnâna, or the realization in *personal experience* of the Brahman), with the attainment of such end, and to the extent that approach is made to it, it becomes superfluous. As the Mahânirvâna says: "To him who has faith in the root, of what use are the branches and leaves?" This stage is, however, both a high and infrequent one, which the great majority (notwithstanding the fancies of some of the "emancipated" in this matter) have by no means reached. As the Mahânirvâna Tantra says, Brahmasâdhana is the highest state of mind; dhyânabhâva is the middling state, and japa comes next. External worship is the lowest of all. Yoga is the process whereby union of the Âtmâ and Paramâtmâ is achieved. Pûjâ (worship) is the union of worshipper and worshipped. But for him who realizes that all things are Brahman, there is neither yoga nor pûjâ. For him there is neither sin nor virtue, heaven, or future birth. There is none to meditate on nor one to meditate.[1]

In the opening chapter of the Kulârnava Tantra it is said

[1] See as to this De la Vallée Poussin, *op. cit.* [2] Yoginî Tantra.
[3] Ullasa xiv., verses 122, 124. See pp. 219, 220, *post.*

that "there are fools who, pleased with the mere name of the Karmakânda, deceive themselves with a multitude of rites. It is not by eating one meal a day that knowledge of the transcendent is attained." "If the ant-hill be struck, is the serpent thereby killed?" "If the mere rubbing of the body with mud and ashes gains liberation, then the village dogs who roll therein have attained it." Ritual is necessary, but it must be accompanied both by sincerity and increasing knowledge, which leads to tattvajnâna, the sole cause of liberation. It is not to be had by talk and self-conceit. Those who read the Scriptures and know not the truth, but pass their time in disputation, are like "the ladle which, lying in syrup, knows not the taste of it." Mere talk leads to nothing. "One may discuss as to what is knowledge and what is knowable, for a thousand years." "Life is short. Many are the Vedas, many are the Shâstras, infinite are the obstacles; therefore is it necessary that the essence be mastered, as the gander sips from the water the milk which has been mixed with it." Ritual schemes exist to meet the requirements of all grades of competency; and their accomplishment with sincerity and intelligence effects their purpose. But of the perfected (siddha) Tântrika Kaula, who has passed through all preliminary âchâras, it is said: "The wise man who through study of the Scriptures has realized the Truth discards them all as he who gathers paddy throws away the husk and straw." Jnâna derived from the Âgamas leads to the Shabdabrahman. That which issues from viveka (discrimination) is the Parabrahman. There is no realization (tattvajnâna) with attachment to Vaidik and Âgamic rites, however much these may be necessary as the preliminary means to its attainment.

* * * * *

If the injunctions of the Shâstra are to be rendered intelligible, certain general principles must first be understood. This is the necessary preliminary to the presentation of the ritual facts. For in these principles lie

their ultimate significance. The author, in his preface, very truly says: "I feel it keenly myself how useless it is to follow a religious practice without understanding it."

For those to whom the Indian way of thinking, expression, imagery, allusions, and metaphor are unfamiliar, it is not always easy to follow at a first reading the author's discursive argument. A summary of that argument in a Western and more ordered form would therefore be useful. The conclusion of our enquiry however, appears to be the fitting time for such a summary, even were there space available for it in this volume. The author's preface indicates the main lines on which he proceeds, which I here shortly state and amplify.

The previous portion of this Introduction states the circumstances under which Indian Shâstra was at one time neglected where it was not misunderstood or condemned. Scepticism, unbelief, and then (according to orthodox views) heresy, passing under the name of "reform," had prevailed. The author, in the beginning of his Preface, rejoices to note a revival of true religion, but as an adherent of Tantra is grieved to observe that this Shâstra had not, when he wrote, received its due share of attention. This was the more necessary in that it is the source of all Sâdhana (practice) and of all Mantras and Yantras. Brahma-knowledge cannot be attained without self-purification, and for this the Tantra provides the only means in the Kaliyuga.

"Doubtless there are (he writes) to be found nowadays some superior Vedântic persons[1] who are wont at all times to say that the portion of the Shâstras which relates to worship and ritual practice (Karmakânda) is only for those who are devoid of knowledge. This is so; but the implication that they have escaped this class has often but little foundation. They are doers of action (Karma), and as much affected by it as are others. The

[1] P. 202.

knowledge of which the Shâstra speaks is not the metaphysical faculty (with its acquisitions) of the mind on the ordinary plane of jâgrat consciousness, but is that spiritual experience the existence of which constitutes the fourth stage of turîya consciousness attained by successful yoga. Notwithstanding—and, in fact, because of—their philosophical disquisitions, such persons still belong to the dualistic world, and there is nothing to be ashamed of in that. We cannot blow it away with our breath, and why should we trouble to do so if it is alleged to be a mere nothing. It would seem as if modern Monism had, through dread of the dualistic world, shrunk all its limbs, and was trying to find a place wherein to hide its head in an unhappily existing universe.[1] Monism (advaitavâda) is doubtless true; but so also, necessarily, is the world of duality for that state of consciousness whence, indeed, it comes. In its own way, this world is as real as the Brahman whose lîlâ[2] it is. What else is the world play of the Brahman but that show of duality which surrounds us?

Worship, by its definition, involves the dualistic idea, and is itself necessary for every dualist, since it is, whether in its ordinary sense, or in that in which it is conceived as all action dedicated to and informed by spiritual purpose and intention,[3] the true and only expression of the Âtmâ to Itself on this plane. It is an essential verity that the Self alone knows the Self. But how may complete self-recognition be attained except the preliminary stages of Sâdhana and worship have been passed? If the elect attain success along the path of knowledge (jnâna mârga), it is because, through action and devotion in this and previous births, they have become com-

[1] See p. 86 *et post.*

[2] "Play." When understood, a very profound Indian concept, proceeding on the ground that no other reason can be assigned for the world appearance than that which is inherent in the nature of the Brahman itself. See also p. 326.

[3] See the fine Mantra in Mahânirvâna Tantra. Ch. vi., vv. 178-181.

petent for that path. What the persons to whom the author refers really mean is that such Karma as consists in worship and so forth must be abandoned, but that which is required for the service of wife and children may be retained by the possessors of Brahma knowledge. It is, however, only those who have truly acquired siddhi who are thereby released from the obligation of observing these rules of the Karmakânda, which help to produce it.[1] The Tantra does not, therefore, at the outset ignore this visible, palpable world. We must acknowledge and rightly tread this earth before the consciousness of the embodied Âtmâ can be transformed into that other state of consciousness which reveals—for it is in fact—the unconditioned Âtmâ Itself. But haste to know the Beyond should not blind us to that which is its present manifestation, constituting both the spacious field and material for Sâdhana. He alone realizes the sweetness of the Divine Play "who has plunged into non-dualistic truth after having churned the dualistic world," which is Its expression to us.

The Brahman is reached through Its universe-aspect. The world does not intervene, as though it were an obstacle hard to surmount between man and God, and set to frighten us. It is the wealth of the Shakti of Vishveshvarî,[2] whom it reveals. The Tantra, therefore, takes into its arms, as if they were its two children, both Dualism and Monism,[3] affording by its Sâdhana and the spiritual knowledge generated thereby the means whereby their antinomies are resolved. It does not entertain the conceit that metaphysics, and still less science, however useful in their own sphere they may be to the full development of conditioned consciousness, can effect

[1] The results of sincere worship are patent. If, however, the cause of this be sought, it will be found to lie in the psychological truth that such a worshipper grows akin to that which he worships—a truth which is expressed in the Indian notion of the blissful abodes, sâmîpya, sâlokya, and others. The Devatâ becomes not only the content of, but the consciousness itself, of the Sâdhaka.

[2] The Devî as Mistress of the Universe. [3] P. 88.

anything beyond it. Being but workings of the jâgrat mind, they can never of themselves transcend the limits of those conditions which constitute it. The ultimate questions which that mind raises never receive an answer which it can verify whilst it remains in its conditioned state. The end of all Sâdhana is the establishment of that fourth or higher state of consciousness, the existence of which is itself the answer to a question which is no longer put. The Tantra harmonizes Vedântik Monism and Dualism.[1] Its purpose is to give liberation to the jîva by a method through which monistic truth is reached through the dualistic world.[2] It immerses its sâdhakas in the current of divine bliss by changing duality into unity, and then evolving from the latter a dualistic play, thus proclaiming the wonderful glory of the Spouse of Paramashiva in the love-embrace of Matter (jada) and Spirit (chaitanya).[3] Those who have realized this, move and yet remain unsoiled in the mud of worldly actions the mere touch of which is to others the cause of their perdition. Though resting and rocking upon the waves of the sangsâra, they are not of it, but detached, and as it were the petals of some wind-rocked lotus. Shiva has therefore said: " In the world some desire non-dualistic, others dualistic, knowledge, but those who have known My truth have passed beyond Dualism and Non-Dualism."

Sâdhana, which is of three kinds—physical, verbal, and mental—must be accomplished by the body, senses, and intellect, according to present conditions of country, time, and person. These, however, are all now bad. India, which has for centuries eaten the bread of servitude to strangers, is to-day filled with persons born of parents of different castes, foreigners, defiled people, and adherents of other religious faiths. Bad and filthy habits and practices, oppression, license, and prostitution prevail. In the impure body, lust, anger, greed, pride, delusion, and envy, contend as upon a battle-field. Restless are the senses, and doubting the heart. The circumstances of the

[1] P. 83. [2] P. 85. [3] P. 92.

times render the carrying out of the Vaidik rites and disciplines impossible.[1] That Aryan life no longer exists in which every event, from the conception in the womb to the cremation of the body, was accompanied by Vaidik Mantra. A heavenly body which, through the control of the passions, has become a suitable vehicle for the development of Brahma knowledge according to Vaidik rules, is nowadays impossible of achievement.[2] Foreseeing this, Shiva revealed the path of Tantra, the Sâdhana of which is framed to meet the needs and circumstances of the Kaliyuga, and the varying temperaments and proficiency of those who live in it.[3] If there be any doubt of its efficiency, actual practice will verify the reality of its claims.

It is not necessary that faith should precede Sâdhana. This, if sincerely performed, will produce faith by the effects it achieves in the mind of the Sâdhaka. If the knowledge of the Brahman already exists, there is no use of Sâdhana. It is, in fact, the very want of such knowledge which renders all prayer and practice necessary. Further, whether one believes in it or not, medicine has the power to cure disease. It does not wait upon the intellectual recognition of that fact.[4] In the same way Siddhi (success), the visible (pratyaksha) fruit of the Shâstra, is the result of its inherent potency. Who knows what will happen in the next birth? That is the best of all philosophies which bears actual and visible fruit in this world. For reasons which the author explains[5] the provisions of this Shâstra act with speed and efficiency, so that fruit ripens on the Tântriks tree before even blossoms appear on the Vaidiks tree. Owing, however, to the neglect of these practical principles, no useful results were being obtained from the renewal of the religious spirit beyond mere barren, pious velleities.

The spiritual ambitions of some were far too presumptuous. Instead of attending to daily duty and worship, they were giving quite an incompetent attention to such

[1] Pp. 72-74. [2] P. 75. [3] P. 80. [4] P. 124. [5] P. 100 *et seq.*

extremely subtle and advanced subjects as Nirvikalpa Samâdhi, Videhakaivalya,[1] and the like matters, which are in no way the concern of the vast bulk of men, who are making good progress, according to their state, if they worship God, and do not hate or cheat their neighbours. Others of greater spiritual competence, through neglect or ignorance of the practical directions of the Tantra, which alone reveals the path, had lost their way. After pointing out that it is idle to suppose that knowledge of the truth can be acquired by simply reading the Yoga Vâshishtha or Gîtâ in the gloom and under the sway of the Kali age, the author, in an interesting passage,[2] states that he has known many a spiritually disposed man who, under the influence of such a day-dream, "has ended in becoming neither a believer nor an unbeliever, but a queer being, half man, half lion." "By constant meditation *on a misty nothing* his mind and heart become such a vacuity that there is neither faith, reverence, devotion, nor love in them, but merely a bewilderment, with the inward lament, 'Alas! I am lost.'" He continues: "In many places we have found such persons coming secretly to ask, 'What means are there left to us?' But their only difficulty is this—they want to know whether it is not possible for them to become Tântrik or Paurânik worshippers in secret whilst keeping up the show of the possession of Brahma knowledge, and without having publicly to wear the sacred crown lock, or thread, or to paint their body with the sacred marks." "Is it not deplorable," he asks, "that a man should be in this condition, repenting at last in this fashion, at the close of his life, after having gone through all its useless troubles?" Doubts concerning the Tantra the Sâdhana Shâstra, arise from ignorance of its true character. Here is to be found the reason why recourse has not been had to it. Common people had, no doubt, much talked about the

[1] That is, the highest form of ecstasy: liberation from the gross body, etc. The author's remarks are not without application to such Westerns as are prematurely attempting Yoga.

[2] P. 77.

Shâstra, and quarrelled over it. Some "illiterate traders, crafty discoverers of magic, and thoughtless and starving interpreters of the Shâstra," had busied themselves with it. "But want of faith in the Shâstra is becoming deeply rooted in people's minds by the troubles into which they fall through failure to realize the truth, *and by the exposition to vulgar gaze of things a proper understanding of which can be acquired from Gurus only*."[1] "It is difficult," he says, "to guess how many hundreds of simple-minded Sâdhus have been, and are being, deceived by the *dangerous temptations* held up before them by these people."[2] Want of understanding of the Shâstra, together with actual abuses of its injunctions by some of its adherents, have led to the insults now levelled at it. Discussion and agitation and insult have, he says, to such an extent and with such constancy persecuted and wounded the community of Sâdhakas that no one who is a son with a body of flesh and blood and strength can bear to see the sacred names of the Mother and Father of the universe slandered and abused in such manner." "Whose heart," he writes, "is not pained to see the axe of bitter abuse laid at the root of siddhi and sâdhana? The object of our effort is to remove this great pain in the heart of the community of Sâdhakas. We hope that the sons of the Aryyan race will not hesitate to uphold the blissful standard of triumph in the assuring name of Her who destroys all Asuras."[3] From the Tantra alone must be learnt its principles, the exposition of which he lays as his dakshinâ (offering) at the Lotus Feet of Dakshinâ (the gracious Devi).

ARTHUR AVALON.

[1] P. 14. One of the causes of this degeneracy is referred to by the author at pp. 106-108.

[2] P. 14.

[3] The demoniac enemies of the Devas and of Dharma. Here also the earthly representatives of the Asura spirit, who oppose religion.

Kâlî in Kali age, Ḳṛishna in Kali age, Gopâla and Kâlikâ in Kali age.

Kâlî and Târâ, the Mahâvidyâs, are grantors of supreme Siddhi.

TANTRA-TATTVA

"Those who, oh Mother of the worlds! receive birth amongst men—a birth ever hard to attain—and who receive also aptitude of senses therein, yet do not worship Thee, fall again after having climbed up to the top of the ladder."

Explained by

Shrîjukta Ṣhiva Chandra Vidyârṇava Bhattâchâryya Mahodaya, Secretary of the Sarvamangalâ Sabhâ, Renowned Religious Preacher and great Pandit.

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Kâlî wakes in Kali age. The She-Serpent wakes in Kali age.

In Kali age *Siddhi* in all the Mahâvidyâs is the best.

OBEISANCE TO THE ALL-GOOD MOTHER WHO IS THE SUPREME DEVATÂ

TANTRA-TATTVA

INVOCATION.[1]

I.

O ALL-GOOD MOTHER!
I bow to Thee Who, sweet in the joyous play of the music of the flute, art the beloved of Râdhikâ;[2]
Who appeareth as a sun illumining the three worlds with Thy effulgent rays;[3]
Who destroyeth the body of Kâma in the right half of Thine own eternal Self;[4]
Who art in joyous play Heramba[5] the son, resting on the lap of Thine own Self as Ambikâ the Mother;
Who art the field of play for the desires of Mahâkâla: and
Who giveth birth to the three worlds.

[1] Mangalâcharaṇa.

[2] The beloved Prakriti of Kṛishṇa in Goloka. "He who is the First Male, the imperishable One, Hari, on Him you have fixed your affection. Him whom all extol as the invisible, the unseen, the impenetrable, you regard as your husband" (Prem Sâgar). Here the Devî is saluted in Her incarnation as Kṛishṇa, the adored of the women of Vraja. Tantra says that in the Kali age, Kṛishṇa and Kâlî, Gopâla and Kâlikâ, are awake (jâgrata)—that is, effective. (See p. 130, *post.*)

[3] See Lalitâ Sahasranâma, verse 3.

[4] Man and wife form one body, of which the right half is the male. Ṣhiva destroyed Kâma, the Deva of Desire, with fire flashed from his eye, when the latter sought to distract him from his great Yoga.

[5] The elephant-headed Ganesha, son of Ṣhiva and Pârvatî.

2.

May the Kaivalya fruit of Kulatattva[1] grow in the grove of my heart on that blossoming and verdant Creeper[2] who, crowned by the beauty of the crescent moon, and more beautiful than the rain-clouds, and more playful than the wife of the rain-cloud,[3] rests on the soft, flowery bed of the breast of Mahâkâla,[4] intoxicated with the sweetness of supreme bliss.

3.

O my heart, seek the shelter of that blue cloud-like Lady Who saith "Fear not," Whose restless curling hair makes lines of refulgent beauty, Whose graceful form is clothed with space,[5] Who charms the great Bhairava[4] with the soft and sweet delights of Her eyes, playful like two large bees.[6]

4.

I bow at the lotus feet of the Supreme Devî;[7] at those feet which give joy to the heart of Him Who is ever joyful,[8] whose form is the mantra[9] in the mahâyantra,[9] and Whose embodiment[10] is the Tantra.

1 The liberation which is the fruit of Tântrik Kulasâdhana.

2 Latâ: a term for woman, who is thus thought of, embracing and dependent on man, as the creeper (latâ) clings to a tree. Thus, in the Yogavâṣhisṭha, Gaurî, the wife of Ṣhiva, is described "embracing him as the Mâdhavî creeper clasps the young Amra tree, with her bosom like a cluster of blossom" (Nirvâṇa Prakaraṇa, chap. xviii.).

3 That is, the lightning. 4 Ṣhiva.

5 That is, who is naked as both Kâlî and Ṣhiva are represented to be.

6 So the Yogavâṣhisṭha speaks of the eyes of Gaurî "as resembling the clusters of black bees fluttering in the summer sky" (Nirvâṇa Prakaraṇa, chap. xviii.).

7 "Goddess" or God in Its mother aspect as creatrix, nourisher, and ruler of the worlds.

8 Ṣhiva, Her spouse; as are also His worshippers. The Tântrik Gurus' names end with Ânanda (joyful).

9 See Introduction. Devî is Sarvayantrâtmikâ (Lalitâ, verses 53 and 56).

10 Tattva. And so the Lalitâ (verse 53) addresses the Devî as Sarvatantrarûpâ.

5.

Mother, in Thy two aspects of Ṣhakti[1] and Ṣhâkta,[2] Thou art the source of both Âgama and Nigama Ṣhâstras.[3] What Thou hast said as Pârvatî[4] is Nigama, and what Thou hast said as Ṣhiva is Âgama. Thou alone, in Thy two aspects of Ṣhakti and Ṣhâkta, art the nurse and nourisher of both Âgama and Nigama. Thou alone, in Thy two forms as Sâdhikâ and Sâdhaka,[5] holdeth in Thy bosom the Tantra Ṣhâstra, with its teachings concerning Ṣhivattatva and Ṣhaktitattva.[6] Again, it is Thou Who, in Thy aspects of Ṣhakti and Ṣhâkta, art the shelter and guardian of both Nigama and Âgama. Whatever modes of Sâdhana[7] have been prescribed in the Tantra Ṣhâstra are hidden in Thy bosom in Thy two aspects of Ṣhiva and Shakti. It was for this I said, O Mother, that it is Thou Who giveth birth to, nourisheth, and guardeth Nigama and Âgama in this world. But to destroy them, that even Thou canst not do. For the Tantra Ṣhâstra all full of mantra is but another form of Thyself. Were the Tantra destroyed, Thou also would be destroyed. Though Thou art the destroyer of the universe, Thy power of destruction avails not against Tantra. So I say, O Mother, that the Nigama and Âgama which are in Thee will never be destroyed! But destroy for once, O Mother, the Nigama and Âgama which are in me. Make cease my repeated coming in and going

[1] Power. (See pp. 238, 305, 314, *post.*)

[2] That is Ṣhaktimân, or one who possesses power. He in whom She as Ṣhakti inheres, though in reality both are one.

[3] See Introduction.

[4] Spouse of Ṣhiva.

[5] That is, male and female practisers of Sâdhana, and worshippers (see Introduction).

[6] That is, the principles relating to the Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti aspects of the one Brahman. The Devî is in the form of Ṣhiva (Ṣhivamûrtih), for, as Ṣhruti says: "There is one Rudra hidden in all things. He is with Mâyâ. He is Devî Herself, and not separate from Her."

[7] See Introduction.

out of this world as Ṣhakti, as Ṣhâkta, as Prakṛiti, as Purusha.[1]

(Or it may be explained in another way):[2] O Mother, Thou alone, as Ṣhakti and Ṣhâkta (as Prakṛiti and Purusha), art the creator of the Nigama and Âgama[3] of Jîva.[4] It is by Thy law that Jîva,[4] through the union of Prakṛiti and Purusha, takes birth. It is Thou who, in Thy two aspects of Ṣhakti and Ṣhâkta (mother and father),[5] nourisheth and protecteth Jîva. Thou alone, O Mother, in Thy twin aspects of Ṣhakti and Ṣhâkta, whereby Thou createth, and sustaineth and guardeth the outgoing and incoming of the world, art the cause of the outgoing, sheltering, incoming, birth, sustenance, and preservation of Jîva.

By Thy mercy, bring about the dissolution[6] of my world[7] in these twin aspects of Thyself as Ṣhakti and Ṣhâkta.

O Thou Who art Ṣhakti-Ṣhiva in Thy universal Prakṛiti-Purusha form,[8] grant me wisdom so that the beauty of the world-enchanting Mother may fill my eyes, my mind, my heart, and the whole of my world.[7]

Appear, O Mother, in Thy eternal form illumining the ten quarters.

With the collyrium paint[9] of wisdom grant glorious vision to the eyes of Thy son blind since birth.

1 There is a play on the words Nigama and Âgama, as meaning not only forms of the Tantra, but also the coming in and going out, the birth and death and rebirth, of the human Jîva, who is the manifestation on the earthly plane of Prakṛiti and Purusha.

2 That is, the Author says that his Sanskrit "ṣhloka" may bear (and probably was written to bear) another interpretation.

3 Birth and death.

4 The embodied spirit, which is the Supreme Spirit, viewed under the apparently limiting conditions known as "upâdhis."

5 The mother is always placed first, not "father and mother," as in English.

6 Pralaya, or the dissolution of the world, which completes the return movement to its cause.

7 That is, the world as it appears to the Author. For to each person the world is his own creation; it is only imagined.

8 See as to Prakṛiti and Purusha (Introduction).

9 Anjana, which is used to clear the vision.

Grant to me that wheresoever I may turn them, whether on earth, the waters, or on space, Thy beauteous form may make me forgetful of the appearance of the world.

INVOCATION.[1]

Mother ! in this world, all, before setting themselves to ought, make invocations of varying kinds.

But what invocation shall I make ?

I know of none but that to the feet of the all-good Goddess.

All that I am about to write in the Tantratattva is already known to Thee who knoweth the hearts of men.

Yantra,[2] Mantra,[2] and Tantra are not distinct from Thee.

But I, though in reality inseparate, wish to remain separate.[3]

As Thou in thy substance art Brahman,[4] as Thou existeth in the form of the universe,[5] so art Thou full of play and dancing.[6]

As Thou art all full of joy, will, consciousness, and matter,[7]

[1] Mangalâcharaṇa—in Bengali: the preceding invocation being in Sanskrit, with Bengali translation and commentary.

[2] See Introduction.

[3] By the will to separate life, which, while itself a manifestation of the Devî, is overcome by Her as Mahâvidyâ: and because thus only can he enjoy Her. (See p. 301.)

[4] Brahmamayî. In the Kurma Purâṇa Ṣhiva says: "This supreme Ṣhakti is in me, and is Brahman Itself. This Mâyâ is dear to me, by which this world is bewildered." Hence the Devî in the Lalitâ is called "Sarvamohinî" (all bewildering).

[5] Viṣhvamayî, see note 7, *post*.

[6] Nrityamayî and Lîlâmayî. The world is the movement and play of the Supreme, as the Sutra says: Lokavattulîlâ kaivalyam.

[7] Ânandamayî, Ichchhâmayî Chinmayî, and Mrinmayî. The Brahman is Sat (existence), Chit (consciousness), and Ânanda (bliss). Ichchhâ (will) is one of its Ṣhaktis, and, having created the visible world, the Brahman enters into it. Tat ṣṛishtvâ tadevânuprâvishat. The Devî is (Lalitâ, verse 76) Kshetrasvarûpa—that is, the field, which is known by the Soul (Kshetrajnâ) or matter. Linga Pr. says: "Devî becomes matter" (Kshettra).

So, O Mother, I wish Thee to fill my mind, my eyes, my heart, with love.
Thou, too, art the power whereby it is in me to take Thy name.
It is Thine own song which Thou wilt hear.
In the love of Thyself Thou wilt dance.
What invocation then can I make ?
The food which I shall give Thee is already Thine. Of it my portion will be the sacred remnants only.
Thou wilt be intoxicated and forget Thyself in Thine own joy.
In the tranquil and solemn ocean of unity I shall swim, and raise therein the waves of duality which are the cry of " Mother, Mother."
If it vexes Thee, drown me with a thrust of Thy foot, but then in so doing Thou must first raise Thy foot from the breast of Mahâkâla.[1]
May be Thou wilt turn to Him with wrathful eyes, and say: " Kill him." But instantly I shall laugh outright and clap my hands, and say: " This is Mother's."[2] O Dark Beauty, whose substance is a mass of consciousness ![3] O Mother ! show me for once the full play of wrath upon the splendour of Thy world-bewitching beauty.
Great is my desire, O Mother! to see the play of merciful flames reddening with wrath[4] in that face of Thine adorned with smiles.[5]

[1] Ṣhiva. The Devî is represented as standing on Ṣhiva, who is, as it were, a corpse, for he is bhoktâ (enjoyer) only, whilst she is karttrî (actress). (See pp. 323, 370, 371, *post.*)

[2] This is a play on the word " ma " (mother) which, as a noun in the possessive case becomes in Bengali " mar," which is also the verbal imperative " mar," meaning " kill."

[3] Chidghana, as if Her body were a thickened mass of consciousness.

[4] The Devî is Krodhâkârânkushojjvalâ (Lalitâ, verse 2). This is explained in chap. xviii. of the second part.

[5] The Devî is (Lalitâ, verse 59) châruhâsa (with beautiful smile); the saying " The moon is thy sweet smile " means that there is a certain state of consciousness (prabodha), which gives the highest bliss, and which should be learnt from the Guru.

Unless that desire of mine is fulfilled, Sâdhana[1] becomes full of pain.
O Thou who dispelleth fear from the heart of Thy Devotees[2]
O Thou who gladdenest the heart of Bhava[3]
Thou knowest (the secret of) Thy play.
Whether Thou makest me afraid or makest me laugh or weep, teach me to say "Mother," so that in doing that which is auspicious (Mangalâcharana) or inauspicious (Amangalâcharaṇa) I may take shelter at the feet of Her Who is good (Mangalâ),[4] dancing and shouting:
"Victory to the Mother."
Victory to Kulendra Kulânanda.[5]
Victory to Guru,[6] Kâmadeva Târkika.[5]
Victory to Kuladânanda[5] and his disciples.
Victory to the Lord, the Supreme Guru.
Victory, Victory, Victory to Kṛishnânanda.[5]
Victory to the most Supreme Guru.
Victory to Guru, the object of highest desire.
Victory, Victory to Bhairava and Bhairavî.[7]
Victory, Victory to the accomplished Sâdhaka.[1]
Victory, Victory to the Sâdhikâ who grants Siddhi.[8]
Victory to Yantra,[9] Victory to Tantra.

1 See Introduction.

2 Fearlessness, at which the Tântrik aims, and which is the special gift of the Devî. The Mârkandeya Purâṇa says: "When you are remembered in times of difficulty, you take away all fear of all beings." She is Bhayâpahâ (remover of fear). Ṣhruti says (Tai. Up. ii. 9-1): "By knowing the bliss of that Brahman, none fear anything."

3 The watery form of Ṣhiva in the Ashtamûrtih.

4 A play on the word "mangalâcharaṇa," which also means "invocation."

5 Celebrated Tântrikas. (See p. 25, *post.*)

6 See Introduction. See the Lalitâ (verse 137): "We adore the Devî who assumes the form of the Guru (secret) in the form of secret knowledge beloved by her secret devotees, residing in the secret place." Hence she is Guhyarûpinî.

7 Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti and their worshippers are so named.

8 Success (see Introduction).

9 See *ibid.*

Victory, Victory to the Tantra Ṣhâstra.
Victory, Victory to the revealer of the Tantra;
Victory, Victory to the Îṣhvarî[1] of the Tantra.
Victory, Victory to Her who fulfils all desires.
Victory, Victory to Her who is all-good.
Victory, Victory, Victory, Victory to the name "The all-good Mother of the world."[2]

[1] Feminine of Îshvara—Lord; the Devî the object of Tântrik worship, who is ruler or promulgator of all Tantras Sarvatantreshî and Sarvatantrarûpâ (Lalitâ, verse 53).

[2] The Devî is the Holy Mother—Ṣhrîmâtâ—the first of Her thousand names in the Lalitâ Sahasranâma, where its commentator Bhâshkararâya says: "The mother is usually called upon in times of sorrow, but our natural mothers are not able to remove the three forms of pain (tâpatraya). Great men have said: 'Since I have had many thousands of births, I have had many mothers and many fathers. I know not how many I may have in the future. O Treasure House of compassion, save me who am overpowered with fear, and have no other refuge from the vast ocean of Sangsâra, full of disaster.' The greatest World-Mother is the only one who can remove the endless misery of existence. We should praise Her as the Mother, so that She may be induced to show mercy to us."

VICTORY TO SHRÌ SHRÌ ÌSHVARÌ, THE ALL-GOOD DEVÌ

PREFACE

BY the grace of the all-good Mother, the drum of Sanâtana Dharma[1] seems to be again sending forth sweet and auspicious notes of triumph in Bhâratavarsha,[2] the land of Âryyas. Just as an intelligent man, who has a good knowledge of music, is naturally impelled, as it were, by some mantra on hearing the deep and soft sound of musical instruments to beat time at every measure; so also a child who has no knowledge of, but who loves and is charmed by, music, feels himself impelled to keep time at every measure by shaking his head, or moving his finger, or clapping his hands, or dancing, or by some other movement. Similarly, every scion of the Âryyan race in India, be he intelligent or not, is to-day intoxicated with the sweet music of the charming mantra of the widespread agitation on the subject of the Sanâtana Dharma, and is keeping time at every measure and dancing. In this great festival, in this ancient Durgâ festival of India, astrology, philosophy, Smṛiti, Purâṇa, Veda, Vedânta, and many other musical instruments are playing in the extensive courtyard of the universe. But we are grieved to find that the great instrument of the Tantra Ṣhâstra, in which all other instruments are included, on which all other instruments depend, and which is the sole source of

[1] In the present connection the phrase may be understood to refer to the eternal religion of the Hindus. As to Dharma, see Introduction.

[2] India.

all yantras[1] and mantras, is to-day silent. We know that the proper place for the playing of this instrument is not a courtyard, but the interior of the temple of Tantra Ṣhâstra, which is full of mantras; as also that the proper place for its discussion is not at a meeting or by society at large, but in the heart of the accomplished Sâdhaka. But what can we do? We are players on the outside. So long as we do not hear the solemn sound of sweet mantras from the accomplished mouth of the Sâdhaka within the temple as also the triumphant sound of the bell in his hand, so long do we fail to make out what music to play—the music of ablution, the music of ârati,[2] the music of sacrifice,[3] or the music of bhoga.[4] The discordant noise of musical instruments in the mantra-less courtyard outside the seat of worship is the sole cause of all the disorder which now besets the work of preaching dharma, even in spite of so much agitation, discussion, speech-making, and interpretation. These musical instruments observe neither time nor measure. Perhaps at the place of worship the rite of great ablution[5] has not yet been begun; but in the courtyard outside the music of the final oblation in homa[6] is commencing. It is deeply to be regretted that the very community which trembles with fear, like a person suffering from constitutional fever, at the very mention of the rules of practice, is to-day constantly busying itself with such extremely subtle and secret matters as nirvikalpasamâdhi samâdhi,[7] videha kaivalya,[8] supreme love, and nirvâna liberation. The result is that this untimely and timeless music has come to be of no purpose and impossible of performance.

In fact, the sight of this outward bustle of science and

[1] See Introduction. The cover of this work bears the imprint of the Shrî Vidyâ Yantra, and the back of the last page that of Smashâna Kâlî.

[2] Ârati (waving of light before the image).

[3] Vali. [4] Offering of food. [5] Mahâsnâna.

[6] The sacrifice in fire (see Introduction).

[7] Highest form of "ecstasy" (see Introduction).

[8] Kaivalya, in which the Jîva becomes free from the trammels of the body (see Introduction).

philosophy made by the community devoid of siddhi and sâdhana[1] reminds us of our village (bârwâri) pûjâ.[2] Just as the condition of the pûjâ makes one fear lest in course of time even the image itself should be dispensed with, so the condition of society to-day makes one afraid lest the talk of siddhi and sâdhana should one day disappear from the Âryyan Society. Let us, however, console ourselves with the knowledge that, even if it were possible for the sun and moon to cease to move, it is impossible for this pûjâ[3] to become a village pûjâ. Although it is the property of common people, it is always uncommon; and, although it is always uncommon, every member of the Âryyan Society has always a perfect right to it as an independent sâdhaka. In this pûjâ there is no priest (purohita). Its object is not self-deception, but sâdhana for the self and acquirement of siddhi. In this temple of sâdhana the worshippers are not[4] unwilling to repeat the mantra on which we depend, but are doubtful about its efficacy. They are not incapable of repeating the mantra, but are apprehensive lest it be of no effect. There is, therefore, a hope that if this doubt can be dispelled and this apprehension removed, a day will soon come when the ten quarters of India will resound with the united voice of innumerable Âryyas, loudly declaring: "There is no Ṣhâstra superior to Tantra, no guru superior to Tantra, no path superior to Tantra, no method superior to Tantra." Emboldened by this hope, we make this novel entry into the field of work, depending on the community of Sâdhakas for support.

It may be said that when doubts have arisen about the Sâdhana Ṣhâstra,[5] it is no easy matter to remove them.

[1] See Introduction.

[2] A pûjâ carried out by subscription, in which often more attention is paid to the accompanying amusements than the pûjâ (worship) itself, which is their justification.

[3] That is, Siddhi and Sâdhana.

[4] As in the village pûjâ, where the worship is left to the purohita.

[5] The Tantra which, being a practical Ṣhâstra, is essentially concerned with Sâdhana, as to which see Introduction.

We, too, do not deny this. But we say that the fact that it is not easy does not make it altogether impossible. It is happy news that doubts have arisen. When thirst has appeared, one need not be anxious about getting water. An unfathomable lake full of water to the brim lies in front. One has only to come down to drink of the water. Having before us the well-arrayed presence of the Tantra Ṣhâstra full of the nectar of eternal truth,[1] we need not be anxious about dispelling the doubts of the Âryyan mind. It is only necessary to advance slowly in the path of truth. It is a matter for regret that, although thirst has appeared and the lake lies in front, it has yet become necessary to advertise the fact and to preach in order to induce people to drink the water. Advertisement is, however, in fact, required, not so much in order to induce people to drink the water, but that the path may be cleared.

There is now much discussion, dispute, and quarrel among common people over the Tantra Ṣhâstra, and the path which leads to the inner truth has become very difficult, very tortuous, full of doubts and thorns. These thorns and doubts are not ascribable to any fault in the lake itself, but are due to want of traffic thereto.

Formerly, in the glorious days of happiness and good fortune of Bhâratavarsha, Âryyan sâdhaka*s* were wont to enjoy, even in their homes, the blessing of drinking the nectar of truth[1] granted to them by their guru*s*. It was not then necessary that they should bathe in a place of pilgrimage[2] for the purpose.

Under the remorseless pressure of the wheel of destiny such days are now past for Bhâratavarsha. One by one the crestgems of the race of sâdhaka*s* have found rest at the lotus-feet of liberation[3] of Her who is all-merciful. For want of competent guru*s* the community of disciples is lamenting in deep darkness. We know not when

[1] Tattva. [2] Tîrtha. [3] Kaivalya.

again will the Îṣhvarî[1] of the world illumine the hearts of devotees with the brilliant light of Her merciful glances; when again the blind children of the world, who now live at a distance from their Mother, will open their eyes of consciousness, and, immersed in the effulgence of the beauty of Her whose substance is consciousness, get up on the lap of Ânandamayî,[2] crying with an overpowering joy, "Mother, Mother"; nor when again shall we hear the words, "The tie of the heart is broken; all doubts are dispelled and all karmas[3] are destroyed for him who has seen Him is higher than the highest."

It is true that the path of Tantra has become full of thorns, but if, on hearing this terrible news, we sit down for ever to ponder on it with fearful hearts, the thorns will never be removed. If you wish to follow a path, you must take your stand on it. The thorns do not belong to the path, but have come to it from outside. Do not be afraid. The dry and worthless thorns will be broken and ground to dust under the heroic tramp of the feet of sâdhakas.[4] Fearing lest you should not believe in our words, we shall, with our eyes fixed on the feet of sâdhakas, be to them their shoes.[5] We care not if we be cut, torn, wounded, and lacerated all over. We have a strong desire to reach the path of truth, holding the feet of sâdhakas to our heart, and to sink for once in the vast lake of the nectar of Tantra. We hope that the community of accomplished sâdhus[6] and sâdhakas will not fail to fulfil this desire on our part.

During the progress of the nineteenth century many Tantras have been printed and translated. Of these, the compilation made by Mahâtmâ Râmatoshaṇa Bhattâchâryya under the title of "Praṇâtoshiṇî," and published

[1] The Devî Mother and Mistress of the world.

[2] The ever-Blissful Mother. [3] Effects of action (see Introduction).

[4] Those who practise Sâdhanâ (see Introduction): devotees.

[5] As the shoe comes between the road and the feet and protects them, so the Author will come between Sâdhakas and the thorns to protect them. [6] Saintly men.

by Prâṇa Kṛishṇa Biswâs Mahodaya, is a work which really gladdens the heart of the world of Sâdhakas. Next the Âryyan Society has been greatly benefited by the publication, by Rasika Mohana Chattopâdhyâya Mahâṣhaya, of the Tantrasâra with a translation, and of many other Tantras. A faint idea of many a Tântrik principle has thus been reflected in the mirror of the hearts of sâdhakas. But, unfortunately, these indistinct impressions have themselves become a source of terror arising from deep doubts. A study of the Ṣhâstra has served rather to make the intricate bonds of the heart stronger than to break them. Still, it seems to have been a source of great good; for, from the doubts it has raised, there has to-day appeared in society a spirit of inquiry into shâstric (scriptural) truths. With the exception of the Prâṇatoshiṇî and the Tantrasâra, all works which have been published on the subject of Tantra are but thorns on the path of truth.

Three classes of vipers are riding together over the Tantra Ṣhâstra—namely, a number of short-sighted and illiterate traders, a few crafty discoverers of practices of magic,[1] and some thoughtless and starving spiritual interpreters of the Ṣhâstra. Through them society is to-day going down to perdition. It is difficult to guess how many hundreds of simple-minded sâdhus have been, and are being, deceived by the dangerous temptations held up before them by these people. Want of faith in the Ṣhâstra is becoming deeply rooted in people's minds by the troubles into which they fall through failure to realize the truth, and by the exposition to vulgar gaze of things a proper understanding of which can be acquired from gurus only. This want of faith cannot be eradicated by anything but the weapon of Ṣhâstra. One must stand at the door of Ṣhâstra in order to dispel doubts about it. From the Tantra alone must be learnt what the Tantra has said about the principles of Tantra.[2]

[1] Indrajâla. [2] Tantra-tattva.

Secondly, as regards worship,[1] many people think that faith must precede practice. But we do not think this possible, particularly in the case of those most hidden and obscure mysteries about Tântrik worship to which we find reference made. The intellect is powerless to understand why the Ṣhâstra has enjoined their performance. Nothing but disgust, hatred, disrespect, and irreverence can find place in the conclusion at which man's erring intellect then arrives. Not to speak of matters which are unknown to common people, even amongst such things as are of common knowledge, and thus well known to them, concerning Shaṭchakra[2] alone there are innumerable interpretations, ideas, and experiences.[3] Most of those who, in the rush of the daily novel religious waves of the twentieth century, lose their footing and know not what to do, nowadays take the name of Kulakuṇḍalinî,[4] in order to establish themselves on firm ground.

Besides this, there is a class of yogîs[5] devoted to the Upanishads and enlightened by the Yogavâṣhishṭha, who often say that there is really a lake of clear water within the body, and that lotuses blooming in them form the Shaṭchakra ! In sorrow the Sâdhaka and poet Râmaprasâda has said:

"O mind, what search do you make for Her ? Madman ! She must be contemplated with feeling in a dark room. Can She be caught without such feeling ?"

But, with a loud voice intoxicated with the drink of the honey of lotuses he has sung:

"In the bed of lotuses Kâlî, in the form of a female swan (hangsî), plays amorously with the male swan (hangsa)."

It has become difficult to bear in silence all the insult to which we see the Ṣhâstra subjected nowadays. Moreover,

1 Upasana. 2 The centres in the body (see Introduction).

3 Pratyaksha siddhi.

4 The Devî whose seat is in the Mûlâdhâra Chakra (see Introduction).

5 Ironically.

there is a class of pure sâttviks[1] who every now and then say that Kâlî is "butcher Kâlî";[2] that Tantra means "licensed grog-shop";[3] that Ṣhiva wrote the Tantra Shâstra under the influence of the fumes of gânjâ,[4] and so forth.

We have no time to pay any heed to the words of these Non-Âryyas. Goats begin to cry as soon as the drum sounds the music of the Durgâ pûjâ festival, but that does not do away with the Pûjâ.[5] Good deeds, of which the Dakshayajna[6] is an example, will be taken care of by Vîrabhadra[7] himself. We know that there are reasons for saying some hard things, but how are Kâlî or Ṣhiva or Tantra to blame? The pity of it all is that those who abuse the Tantra in this way are themselves initiated in Tântrik mantra. But what can we do? It is the nature of unchaste women to live on the means of their husbands, and at the same time to sing the praises of their paramours. We are not sorry to see the downfall of those whose nature is such. What we are sorry for is that the discussions and agitations carried on by these wicked people, and their example, constantly persecute and wound the community of sâdhakas to such an extent that it is almost on the point of being destroyed. Who that is a son with a body of flesh and blood and possessed of strength, can bear to see the sacred names of the Mother and the Father of the universe slandered and abused in such a manner? Whose heart is not pained to see the axe of bitter abuse laid at the roots of siddhi and sâdhana? The object of our effort is to remove this great pain in the heart of the community of Sâd-

1 Persons in whom the sattva guṇa predominates (see Introduction), "good people," here used ironically.

2 Because animal sacrifice is made to this Devatâ.

3 Abkâri: the reference being to the use of wine in the ritual of the Tântrik Vâmâchârins, and the abuse of that ritual in disobedience to Shâstric injunctions. Intemperance, as the Shyâmarahasya says, leads to Hell.

4 Hemp (*Cannabis indica*).

5 At which they are sacrificed.

6 See Introduction.

7 The Great Bhairava produced by Ṣhiva to destroy Daksha's sacrifice.

hakas. We hope that the sons of the Âryyan race will not hesitate to uphold the blissful standard of triumph in the assuring name of Her who destroys all Asuras.[1]

Thirdly, we often find that of such members of the Âryyan Society as have been recently initiated, or are willing to be initiated, many are aimlessly moving about along various paths. Of some, perhaps, the gurus are dead; some have taken initiation from women gurus; some are sorry for the incompetence of their Gurus; some are disciples of sanyasis, who have gone away to distant places where it is difficult to go to them; some have only sons of gurus, who, too, are of immature age, ill educated, or uninitiated. In the case of some, the families of gurus have died out; and some, again, who have seen the different views of different munis[2] in the works of Tantra Ṣhâstra printed with translations and commentaries, are, as it were, counting one by one the waves of a vast sea. Every one says: "Do this," "Don't do this." But if I ask why I should do this, he becomes dumb. I do not disbelieve the words of the Ṣhâstra, nor do I say that it will be useless to follow them. I only want to know what it is that I do. Unfortunately, there is no means of my knowing it. Such a destructive thunder has fallen on the high head of the present high society that not only people are ignorant that the mûlamantra[3] of the Ishṭadevatâ,[4] the Devatâ of one's worship, has a meaning, but many are even averse to believing that it may have one. It might not have mattered whether I know the meaning or not, had not the Ṣhâstra itself, on the authority of which we base our practices, or the little of them we follow, said that it was useless and improper to follow a practice without knowing and understanding it.

In the Kulârṇava Tantra it is said: "O Spouse of Ṣhambhu! fruitless are the worship and all the acts of those who do not know the true nature of Devatâ, the

[1] Demons.
[2] Sages (satirically).
[3] The principal Mantra of a Deva.
[4] Deity of the worshipper.

principle[1] underlying yantras,[2] and the shakti[3] of mantras."

I cannot disbelieve the great saying of the Ṣhâstra, for how can I ignore the prohibitions of the Ṣhâstra whose commands I have to obey? Next I see it proved in my own case that it will be useless to follow a practice without knowing and understanding it. How can I disbelieve that of which I myself am a witness? I feel it keenly myself how useless it is to follow a religious practice without understanding it. The prohibition, therefore, must be acted upon, and in order to do so the thing must be known and understood. I have, however, already stated what the condition is of those from whom I am to know and understand it. Owing to these circumstances, it has become necessary to find out a means by which people will be prevented from giving up practice through want of understanding, trampling, through want of knowledge, on the Syamantaka gem which adorns His head, and thinking that daily worship and the like are so much waste of labour. It is necessary that I should have firm faith in the doctrine, that the truth which I have come by is unerring whether or not I can act according to it, and that the path which I have taken is the broad royal road to the seat of the Queen of Queens[4] of the universe. It is after a due consideration of the opportunities which the elements of time, place, and person may at present offer for finding out a means of effecting this that we undertake this great pious act[5] of expounding the principles of Tantra. This pious act is no doubt higher than the highest, and we are more insignificant than the most insignificant. It makes one laugh to think of a Râjasûya[6] Yajna in a beggar's house. But there is no help for it. One who is hungry cannot afford to be ashamed of eating. In particular one who stands on this path should naturally

1 Tattva. 2 Worshipped diagrams (see Introduction).
3 The potency of the mantra.
4 Râjrâjeṣhvari. 5 Vrata (see Introduction).
6 A great sacrifice performed in ancient times by conquering Kings.

be devoid of shame; for He who is the crest-gem of shameless people and clad with space[1] is the Revealer of the Tantra Ṣhâstra. In this path there is no cause for shame in being a beggar. He who has shown the path by performing this Râjasûya Yajna is Himself the crest-gem of beggars. In spite of his being the King of Kings[2] of the three worlds, He is eternally a beggar at the door of Annapûrṇâ,[3] the Mother of the universe. Being the meanest of the servants of such a world-renowned Beggar-Master, why should I be ashamed of begging? Begging is the tribute which we have to pay to our King. The fundamental principle of our worship is to worship the Mother with alms received from Her (to worship the Ganges with Ganges water). If one is to be called a beggar or to be ashamed for this, then we do not know who is not a beggar and who will not be ashamed. The three worlds beg, and there is none but that Jagaddhâtrî[4] to give alms. Directly or indirectly, She is the only hope. We, therefore, trust that Mother Annapûrṇâ, who dwells in the hearts of all Sâdhakas, and is the Intelligence who works the jîva-instrument,[5] will fill this begging bowl of ours with remnants of Her food. By the blessing of the Father of the universe and the grace of the Mother of the universe, even in such a destitute house as we possess, the final dakshiṇâ[6] of the râjasûya of Tantra Tattva will be placed at the lotus feet of Dakshiṇâ (the gracious Devî).

ṢHRÎ ṢHIVA CHANDRA.
ṢHARMMA VIDYÂRNAVA.

KĀSHÎ (BENARES),
1811, SAKA ERA,
The month of Falguna.

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[1] Ṣhiva is represented naked. [2] Râjrâjeṣhvara.

[3] The Devî bountiful who dispenses food, and who presides at Benares.

[4] The Devî as supporter of the universe.

[5] Jîva-yantra; the jîva, or embodied spirit, is Her instrument.

[6] Presents offered to the officiating Brahmaṇas at the conclusion of a rite.

CHAPTER 1

APPEARANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF THE TANTRA SCRIPTURE

NECESSITY FOR THE SCRIPTURE.

THE living together of many persons in one family is called the Sangsâra.[1] He is a praiseworthy Karttâ,[2] who in the performance of his family duties, justly makes all members of the family the objects of an equal care, and of both affection and punishment. Though the householder has equal care and affection for all, yet punishment is properly awarded to him who strays from the right path and thinks the Karttâ is partial. This is household morality in man's small kingdom, the house. This morality, when applied to a kingdom, is called statesmanship. In short, whenever equality is to be kept among a number of people living in union, the King must, as all admit, make provision both for the contentment and punishment of his subjects. Whether these understand it or not, the King must, if he would preserve the kingdom, take hold of this rod of statesmanship which is both stern and sweet. What Indian is there

[1] The Sangsâra is the coming and going, the cycle of birth, action, death, and rebirth: the world in which all live who have not, by knowledge of the self (Âtmajnâna) and the extinction of the will to separate life, attained liberation (Moksha). Brahman is the root of the eternal Asvattha (fig) tree, with roots above and branches below (Kath. Up., iii. 2. 1). It also means in Bengali a family.

[2] The head of the joint family in a Hindu household.

who, living in this portion of the Empire which is under the sole sovereignty of the present Queen Empress[1] (Râjrâjeṣhvarî) will deny this? You and I are each the King of a small family kingdom. It is of such combined kingdoms that the Empress of India is to-day Râjrâjeswarî. Again, She[2] is the Râjrâjeṣhvarî of the three worlds,[3] whose kingdom is the countless millions of vast worlds. She is the Queen without a second of the kingdom of the universe, and Ṣhâstra[4] is the name of her universe-controlling and unfailing will. You and I have not the capacity to understand the principles which govern the profound statecraft of the kingdom of eternal worlds which belong to the Empress of the universe. You and I are in this more insignificant than the most insignificant, illiterate, and ignorant people. Our sole capacity is to obey Her commands. They alone understand the world-play[5] of Brahmamayî,[6] who, by the mercy of Mahâvidyâ[7] and the grace of Brahmavidyâ,[7] have been able to make their way through the mass of dualistic[8] darkness thick with illusion,[9] and to reach the ultimate truth of monistic doctrine.[10] You and I have come to

[1] The book was written under the reign of the late Queen, whose name is retained to give point to that which follows.

[2] The Devî ("Goddess") or God in Its mother aspect as creatrix, nourisher, and ruler of the worlds (see A. and E. Avalon's "Hymns to the Goddess").

[3] The Triloka, Earth (Bhuh), the upper world (Bhuvah, Svah, and others), and the underworlds (Pâtâla).

[4] Scripture.

[5] The world is the play of the Brahman. As the Sutra, says Lokavattulîlâ Kaivalyam.

[6] The Devî who is one with Brahman (see *ante*, note 2, and Introduction).

[7] The Devî as destroyer of ignorance and illusion (Avidyâ), which veils the Reality. Both Mâyâ and Vidyâ reside in the Lord as His Ṣhaktis, like shade and light of the sun, and are the respective causes of bondage and liberation.

[8] Dvaita is that which sets the world and the embodied spirit (Jîva), apart from the supreme spirit (Parabrahman), as opposed to Advaita, which proclaims their unity.

[9] Avidyâ (see note 7).

[10] Advaita (see note 8).

this world with the duty cast upon us of advancing only along that path which is marked by their footprints. As the courtiers of a royal court are not the authors, but merely the interpreters, of statecraft, so the truth-seeing Ṛishis[1] are not the originators of the Sâdhana Ṣhastra,[2] but its remembrancers merely.[3] It is not a Ṣhâstra marred by mistakes, errors, and deception. Bhagavân, the creator of all creatures and knower of all hearts, is its revealer. He in whom mistakes are mistaken, in whom error is erroneous, and in whom deception is itself deceived: Bhagavatî,[4] the supporter of the world, is its hearer. Nârada and other Ṛishis learnt the truth[5] from Brahmâ[6] and other Devas.[7] Vaṣhishṭha, Vishvâmitra, Gautama, and other Gurus[8] learnt in their turn from the latter. It is these alone who are the courtiers of the royal court of the Empire of the Universe. You and I, the subjects of this Empire of the Universe, are merely the servants of that statecraft in the form of Ṣhâstra which has been promulgated by them. They have had the privilege of being near the person of the King, and have thus had an opportunity of observing with their own eyes the principles which, even in the smallest matters, govern His actions. They have, with bowed heads, admitted the unerring truths of Ṣhâstra. To look, then, askance at these truths, to attempt airily, without reaching the greatness or acquiring the knowledge of the Ṛishis, to set them aside is just as if one were to try to

[1] Inspired seers, by whom the Ṣhâstra were "seen"—that is, to whom it was revealed.

[2] Sâdhana is the means employed to attain an end; in this case the ultimate aim of Being (see Introduction). The Tantra is pre-eminently a practical Sâdhana Ṣhâstra.

[3] The Author of Ṣhâstra is the Brahman (God). The Ṛishis merely heard and handed it down.

[4] Feminine of Bhagavân (see p. 26, note 2)—the Devî.

[5] That is, the Ṣhâstra.

[6] The creative Deva of the "Trinity" (Trimûrti), who must be distinguished from the Supreme Brahman in the neuter voice.

[7] "Shining ones," or "Gods" (see Introduction).

[8] Spiritual teachers.

blow away the Himâlayas—an act which is ridiculous enough to make the intelligent laugh, the mad man dance, and which is likely to bring a violent death to the foolish Non-Âryya.[1]

Understanding of the Scripture.

I hear you say: "Take me there; I will examine with my own eyes whether the thing be true or not." But the answer is that it becomes him alone to say this who has eyes to see and feet to walk, and simply desires a knowledge of the path. As for me, I have neither eyes nor feet nor knowledge of the path, but only a demoniac, indomitable egotism, which prevents me from seeing what I have, and what I have not. Still, I know not how kind She is. Lame as I am, the Mother[2] has carried me through the journey of eighty-four lakhs of births,[3] fraught with the greatest of difficulties, and has placed me in an Âryyan gotra[4] in Âryyâvarta, in the land of Bhârata,[5] where freedom has its fullest play. But how hard is the wheel of ill fortune! The moment I fall from the lap of the Mother,[6] that very instant my head is made restless with the waves of freedom. Now, I would rather sink in that sea of freedom which I love so much, and would rather die than believe that I am dying without ocular proof of it.

You may say, "My path leads to death, but, unless I die, how can I know that that path of mine is bad and that yours is good? This is all that I can say about

1 The Hindus are properly called Âryya, and their country Âryyâvarta.

2 The Devî (*ante*, p. 21, note 2) who is called Ambikâ and Ṣhrîmâtâ (see *ante*, p. 8, note 2).

3 The previous births, as inorganic things, aqueous animals, creeping animals, birds, beasts, and man (*vide post*), through which the soul evolves. *Cf.* Empedocles *apud* Diog. Laert., viii. 77.

4 Lineage.

5 India.

6 Literally, "the skirt of the dress" of the mother, to which little children cling.

acquaintance with the path." Even he who is prepared to serve egotism with such deadly resolve, the ever-merciful Ṛishis call with a sweet tone softened with love, and say: "You are not asked to believe as a favour. Practise, and you will see for yourself that Medicine, Astrology, and Tantra produce visible results at every step."[1] Lame though I am, I thus reach the place I sought by the blessing of the Most High; and by the grace of Ṣhâstra, unbelieving even as I am, the path is made known to me. But still my wants are not supplied. Without eyes, how can I see? How can I look for the path? Instantly the Ṣhâstra says: "Jîva,[2] even though you are blinded by the darkness of ignorance, seek shelter at the feet of the Guru.[3] He with sticks smeared with the brilliant paint[4] of wisdom will open your celestial eyes." The Ṣhâstra says: "By whom the eye is opened." But I hear: "By whom the eye is rooted out."[5]

How may one avert this misfortune? What shall I do with this egotism which makes me feel ashamed to say to the Guru: "I do not understand." It was for this I said that there is no peace until this indomitable egotism ceases. It is useless to take a Guru if you have yourself understood. But if you have not, why should you be ashamed to admit it? Perhaps you will say: "Explain first, and then I shall believe." Why all this useless importunity? If you think that you can show that the Ṣhâstras are mistaken by dint of your own intelligence, and that you will destroy it with the sharpened arrows of reasoning, argument, and judgment, then you must have made good progress indeed! This Ṣhâstra is neither philosophy nor science. It is the Sâdhana[6] which leads

[1] A common saying establishing the pratyaksha and experimental character of the Ṣhâstra, which is primarily concerned not so much with speculation as with fact.

[2] The embodied spirit, here the human being. [3] Spiritual director.

[4] Collyrium, applied with stick to the eyes, which is believed to clear the vision.

[5] A play on the words "unmîlitam" and "unmûlitam."

[6] Art and practice (see p. 2, note 2, and Introduction).

to Siddhi.[1] It must be practised as well as understood. By practice, even though without understanding, it will be made plain. But no amount of understanding without practice will effect this. A Mahamahopâdhyâya pandit[2] who has conquered the whole world with his learning is, if devoid of practice, not the equal of the meanest of insects in the domain of Sâdhana. On the other hand, should a great fool prove himself to be a faithful devotee attached to Sâdhana, he is considered by Ṣhâstra to be one in a thousand. It has been said: "Perhaps but one man in a thousand strives for Siddhi, and amongst a thousand of those who strive, maybe only one may be found who knows me truly." It is not the hero of intellect, who is not also the hero of austere practices,[3] who wins the battle of Sâdhana. Just as all the efforts of a great charioteer who has with him an army complete in all its four component parts[4] is useless if he be himself unarmed, so all the learning of a pandit of mighty intellect is but a vain thing if he be not equally possessed of the power which arises from Sâdhana. Whoever with the resolve, "I will accomplish my object or die in the effort," has jumped into a fire, to him, a crest-gem amongst devotees, the Ṣhâstra gives shelter in its secure arms. If to-day all men had the strength of faith of Kâmadeva Târkika, hero most powerful in the field of austerity, or of Gaṇeṣha Upâdhyâya, whose life was one long surrender to the Mother; or of Râmaprasâda,[5] who was, as it were, a bee intoxicated with the honey of the lotus feet of Ṣhakti,[6] should we in that case have had

[1] Siddhi means success generally. It includes the eight lesser great powers, such as dominion over the elements, and the great Siddhi or liberation (Mukti) (see Introduction).

[2] A title of honour given to learned pandits.

[3] Tapas (see Introduction).

[4] That is, infantry, cavalry, elephant corps, and the chariots.

[5] The celebrated Bengali poet and Ṣhâkta.

[6] Ṣhakti is Devî—that is, both the power of God and God Itself. Each of the Devas has His Ṣhakti or power worshipped under the form of His spouse.

to sing in Tantra Tattva[1] the song of all these evil designs (against the Ṣhâstra). But the day is now lost to us. That unflinching faith in Tantra, the Sâdhana-Ṣhâstra, has been shaken.

Doubts concerning this Scripture.

It is said: "We have the Vedas the Ṣhâstra of prayer. Why, then, has the Tantra Ṣhâstra again been put forward?" This is the first point of doubt in the present-day society of men vain of their education. What appears to them as a matter of still greater doubt and the mere raving of a madman is the assertion that by means of the Tantra Ṣhâstra such Siddhi may be gained in one life, in one year—nay, in one week—as can only be otherwise with uncertainty attained after the practice of age-long austerities. Why, they say, should Bhagavân[2] be so merciful to the Kali age[3] with all its most heinous sins, as to make it possible to attain in one life or in one week that which was rarely attained even by Devas like Indra.[4] If such be possible, then Îṣhvara,[5] they say, must be highly partial. At such talk it is difficult to restrain a smile. You and I might just as well be inspectors of the kingly

[1] This book.

[2] God; that is, He who is possessed of the six forms of aiṣhvaryya which pertain to Îshvara—viz., Ṣhrî (auspiciousness), Vîryya (power), Jnâna (wisdom), Vairâgya (dispassion), Kîrti (glory), and Mâhâtmya (greatness).

[3] The fourth or last of the four ages in which the orthodox consider the world now to be, and which is marked by sin and weakness. The first, or Satya Yuga, was the golden age; in Tretâ Yuga virtue declined by one-quarter; in Dvâpara Yuga by one-half; and in Kali Yuga by three-quarters (see Introduction).

[4] Deva of the firmament, King of the celestials.

[5] The "personal God," Creator and Ruler of the world, the Brahman with qualities; thought of with Prakṛiti; associated with, but not Himself subject to, Mâyâ (Mâyâvichchhinnam chaitanyam cha Parameshvara) (Vedânta Paribhâshâ, 9). The supreme individuality is the quality of Îṣhvara. In the Viṣhvasharîra chapter of the Virûpâkshapanchâshika it is explained as "Lordship, activity, independence, consciousness itself."

work of Îṣhvara, whose reputation for administration would in that case depend on your or my criticism. On the other hand, I ask, if He is partial, what do you or I lose by that? If He who is the highest, all-powerful, omnipresent, and the knower of all hearts becomes partial, how can you or I prevent that? You may say we shall blame Him. But what does it matter to Him whether you and I blame Him? He who knows the hearts of the meanest insect, does He not know that you and I will blame Him? In spite of His knowing it, He has taken on Himself the blame, and, solemnly declaring, "True, true, again true—true there is no doubt," has said: "It is true and beyond all doubt true that in the Kali age there is no liberation for him who forsakes the path laid down in the Âgama,[1] and attempts to pursue another. In the Kali age the fool who seeks to attain Siddhi by the paths shown in other Ṣhâstras is like a thirsty man who digs a well on the very banks of the Jâhnavî.[2] For the attainment of happiness in this world or the next there is no path which leads to both enjoyment and salvation[3] so excellent as that shown in the Tantra."[4]

What will you gain by threatening with your blame Him from whose own mouth has come this unerring conclusion? He who is afraid of blame or pleased by praise may be your Îṣhvara,[5] but he is not the God of the world. He who is God (Îṣhvara) of the world is the Lord (Îṣhvara). His divinity and lordship over the universe stands supreme, spurning both glory or disgrace, praise or blame.

[1] Here the Tantra.

[2] The River Ganges.

[3] The peculiar claim of the Tantras is that it gives both worldly enjoyment and salvation. It is Bhuktimuktikarâṇicha. In Yoga there is no enjoyment (Bhoga), and in enjoyment no Yoga (union with the Supreme). But the Tântrik has both (Mahânirvâṇa Tantra, chap. i., verses 50, 51; Muṇḍamâlâ Tantra, chap. ii.). Bhoga, or enjoyment, is of five kinds—pleasure arising from sound, touch, sight, taste, and smell. This enjoyment may be had on earth or in the transitory heavens of enjoyment, which are to be distinguished from mukti, or liberation, the state which alone endures.

[4] Mahânirvâṇa Tantra, chap. v.

[5] Page 26, note 4.

This is the wealth of his Vaikuṇṭha.[1] If you please, you may blame, you may chastise, you may deal hard blows with your fist at the foot of the Himâlaya Mountains, yet the immovable Lord of mountains will not be shaken, though your fingers will be torn and broken. Those who, in endeavouring to discuss the truth as to the divine (Îṣhvara Tattva), have realized the effect of doing so may desist. But those who judge God by their own ideas of justice will not be satisfied with that. We ourselves do not deny the apparent partiality alleged, but we say that His strict adherence to justice has not been broken by the mercy shown to the creatures of the Kali age. On the contrary, not to have treated them with such kindness would have been unjust. We ask what sort of justice was it on the part of God to give to them of the Satya age[2] a longevity of a lakh of years,[3] with their life centred in the marrow,[4] and then to give to men in the Kali age a longevity of a hundred years, and life dependent on food ? If one injustice is done, that is no excuse for doing a hundred others. Moreover, what can you do if injustice has been once done ? But, as a matter of fact, " Poison is the remedy for poison." What does it matter to you or me if He has made up for the deficiency in justice caused by the grant of greater longevity in the Satya than in the Kali age, by, according to Sâdhana, a more rapid effect in the Kali age than in the Satya age ? In fact, in Him there is neither deficiency nor the reverse. In this drama of the world He is both the Chief Actor and the Chief of Actresses. This drama commenced in the beginning with the union of Actor and Actress, and will conclude, according to His unfailing will, at that night which is the end of time.

[1] The heaven of Vishṇu.

[2] The first, or golden age, marked by virtue, prosperity, happiness, health, etc. (see Introduction). [3] 100,000.

[4] The Hindu belief is that in the first age life was centred in the marrow, in the second age in the bones, in the third age in the blood, and in the last or present age is dependent on food.

Those who are acquainted with the principles of Sanskrit drama know that it is composed in the form of the tail of a cow.[1] I do not know on what evidence rhetorical poets discovered this form of composition, but, so far as one can surmise, it appears that form was adopted in imitation of the ideal drama of that Primeval Poet,[2] the Creator of the universe. From the description of the four ages—namely, Satya, Treta, Dvâpara, and Kali[3]—it would seem that in the ideally composed play of the universe the chain of things from Brahmâ, the Hiraṇyagarbha and grandfather[4] of men, to the close of the Kali age is arranged in the form of a cow's tail. When the close of the play approaches, the King of actors, Mahâkâla,[5] will, after hastily withdrawing all the materials for the play, lay down to rest upon the couch of Mahâpralaya[6] in the last world-scene, the great cremation ground strewn with ashes. The Mother, the Queen of actresses and Charmer of Mahâkâla,[7] will place Her right foot on His heart, and, losing Herself in the waves of love and joy of the great mass of consciousness,[8] appear, as it were, a dancer maddened by untiring dancing. The hasty closing and destruction of the Kali age is but a preparation for this dancing, and nothing else. The thought of this scene may make the unbelieving and impious tremble with fear, but these happy tidings will raise joyous waves of love in the heart of the devout. The will of Her whose substance

1 As Shloka, 277, of the Sâhitya Durpana, says: Gopuchchhâgrasamagrantu vandhanantasya kîrtitam. The acts of a drama should be so arranged as to be reduced in size from the first to the last, just as the tail of a cow beginning broadly tapers to a point.

2 Brahmâ, so called in the Ṣhrîmadbhâgavata, and elsewhere.

3 See Introduction.

4 Lokapitâmaha.

5 Shiva (see Mahânirvâṇa Tantra, chap. v.).

6 The great dissolution of things, when all will return to that from which they on the morning of the day of Brahma originated.

7 The Devî, as Mahâkâlî.

8 Chidghana (see *ante*, p. 6, note 3). Chit, the pure Brahman, is the hearth of fire from which, according to the Lalitâ, the Devî springs (Chidagnikuṇḍasambhûtâ).

is will[1] shall be fulfilled, for it is in the power of none to frustrate it.

Next, when you become jealous at the mere mention of His unfathomable mercy towards His creatures of the Kali age as compared with that which He showed to those of the Satya age, it would seem as if you thought that the creatures of these two ages constituted two distinct classes at feud one with the other, and never meeting in each other's home. A creature of the Satya age will not (you suppose) appear in the Kali age, and one of the latter age will not have appeared in the former. No matter; be it so. But I ask: Everyone admits that not every creature in the first three ages has attained Siddhi,[2] nor, on the other hand, is everyone in the Kali age devoid of Siddhi. What, then, is the fate of such Sâdhakas[3] of the first three ages who have not attained Siddhi, and of such men of the Kali age as are not, but are about to become, Sâdhakas? According to your argument, no creature of the Kali age will have appeared in the Satya age, and no individual of the latter age will appear in the Kali age. In other words, at the close of these ages such persons will attain either Nirvâṇa,[4] and be totally absorbed in the Parabrahman,[5] or will sink at once into an eternal hell. Blessed be this judgment to which your justice leads you! What an unerring decision![6] You were startled at hearing that the Jîva[7] in the Kali age can attain Siddhi in one

[1] Ichchhâmayî. The substance of the Devî is the three Ṣhaktis, Ichchâ (will or desire), Jnâna (knowledge), and Kriya (action).

[2] That is, become a Siddhapurusha.

[3] That is, those worshippers who practise Sâdhana.

[4] That is, complete unconditioned Mukti, as distinguished from the temporary and conditioned padas known as Sâlokya, Sârûpya, Sâmîpya, and Sâyujya.

[5] The unconditioned, attributeless or higher Brahman, as contrasted with the same Brahman manifesting itself with attributes in creation—the apara or "lower" Brahman.

[6] Valihari.

[7] The embodied spirit, which is the supreme spirit, viewed under the limiting conditions known as "upâdhis."

lifetime. But the Jîva of your Satya age attains Nirvâṇa the moment it commences Sâdhana. It may thus, indeed, happen that a man who by good fortune is born at the close of the Satya age may attain without labour in one life, and by the mere circumstance of his birth at the close of that age, that same Siddhi which another has only attained in the same age by the practice of austerities for ten million years.[1] Advocate of Justice, tell me now of what kind of justice is this the impartial and carefully considered opinion ?

You and I, whose knowledge does not extend beyond, at most, a hundred years, are not in a position to argue as regards that justice, the wheel of which turns but once in eighty-four lakhs[2] of births. In the Viṣhvasâra Tantra the Ṣhâstra says: " There is no birth like unto the human birth. Both Devas[3] and Pitṛis[4] desire it. For the Jîva the human body is of all bodies the most difficult to come by. For this it is said that human birth is attained with extreme difficulty. O Pârvatî,[5] amongst those beings who have obtained this rare human birth, those who have conquered all doubt are very few, and of those who have conquered doubt such as are attached to Mantra[6] and Tantra are again very few. Among such pious men as are attached to Mantra and Tantra, such as are proficient in Tantra, which is adored by all, are the best; and, again, amongst the latter the Sâdhaka is the best of all, who is deeply versed in all the Tantras."

" It is said in all the Ṣhâstras that of the Jîva's eighty-four lakhs of births the human birth is the most fruitful. In no other birth can Jîva acquire knowledge of the truth. Human birth is the stepping-stone to the path of liberation. But rare are the meritorious[7] who come by it."

1 A crore, or an hundred lakhs, or 10,000,000. 2 8,400,000.

3 Devas, the celestial intelligences intermediate between Îṣhvara, the Lord, and Man (see Introduction). 4 See Introduction.

5 The spouse of the God Ṣhiva. The Tantras are generally cast in the form of a dialogue between Her and Her husband.

6 See Introduction. 7 Puṇya.

"O Daughter of the mountain,[1] Jîvâtmâ, which decreaseth not, passes through eighty-four lakhs of births as inorganic things, insects, birds, beast, and the like. And after that, O Supreme Devî, it attains that human body which is so difficult to acquire."

Jîva attains the position of the thrice-born,[2] having had thirty lakhs of births as inorganic things, nine lakhs of births as aqueous animals, ten lakhs of births as creeping animals,[3] eleven lakhs of births as animals of the air,[4] twenty-four lakhs of births as beasts, and four lakhs of births as human beings, having thus in all travelled through eighty-four lakhs of births. When Jîva attains the human body, it becomes Lord of Dharma.[5] It is again born and again dies. In this manner, controlled by the bonds of Karma,[6] the Jîva takes birth from various sources,[7] and dies eighty-four lakhs of times. By the command of Yama,[8] Jîva goes to the Brahmaloka.[9] On its return from thence, it obtains the human body, which is so rarely obtained, and is able to secure from a good Guru initiation in the mantra of Mahâvidyâ and knowledge of the truth. Then alone does the Jîva gain the supreme liberation, and by the grace of Mahâvidyâ has not to return so long as the universe[10] endures. In its eighty-four lakhs of births as inorganic and organic things, beasts, birds, insects, flies, and the like, the Jîva

1 A title of Pârvatî as daughter of the mountain-king Himavat.

2 That is, the three superior castes, Brâhmaṇa, Kshatriya, and Vaiṣhya, which upon the Upanayana ceremony become twice-born, and have thus both a natural and a spiritual birth.

3 Worms, serpents, etc. A lakh = 100,000.

4 Birds, etc.

5 See Introduction.

6 Karma is action and the product of action. Each action produces its necessary result. So long as a man's Karma is not worked out, and the thirst for separate life is not exhausted, so long he remains in its bonds. It is of two kinds, good and bad, both constituting the "impurity of action."

7 Yoni.

8 Lord of the lower world and of death.

9 Satya: region of Brahma, the highest, or, according to some, the three highest of the upper worlds—Satya, Mahah, and Tapaloka.

10 Brahmâṇḍa, lit. "egg of Brahmâ."

enjoys longevity according to its Karma. Some live one hundred years, some a thousand, some a lakh, some even more, and some live crores[1] and crores of years. It passes my understanding that Ṣhâstra can be your authority for the notion that all Jîvas—past, present, and future—of this enormous cycle will attain the highest Samâdhi,[2] owing to the simple circumstance that an age has come to an end, and this in spite of the fact that their Karma is of all forms fulfilled, unfulfilled, and partly fulfilled, and partly unfulfilled, worked out and unworked out, partly worked out and partly unworked out.[3]

But you may, as a last resort, say: "I do not believe in eighty-four lakhs of births." But it does not become you to say this either; for the very authority and reasoning upon which you accept the four ages spoken of in the Ṣhâstras are the same as that on which you are bound to accept the statement as to eighty-four lakhs of births. Both are conclusions of Ṣhâstra. Who will believe the man who accepts one part of the Shâstra and judges the other mistaken? Who thinks the right half of a man's body to be conscious and the left unconscious? Let me put you a plain question. Why should you not believe? What is the cause of your unbelief? You will say, The number eighty-four lakhs. But I reply that that very number which is the cause of your unbelief is the ground of my firm faith. Who are you to say that, because these eighty-four lakhs of births are unseen by you and me, that what is unseen does not exist? The most you can say is that you do not know whether they exist or not. For the same reason, that I cannot say that it exists because I have not seen it, you cannot say that it does not exist because you have not seen it. If it is non-existent because I have not seen it, then the world does not exist for the blind man. The blind man, moreover, does not himself see. Is it, therefore, to be concluded that

[1] A crore is 100 lakhs, or 10,000,000.
[2] Here "end."
[3] Pûrṇa, apûrṇa, pûrṇâpûrṇa, bhukta, abhukta, bhuktâbhukta.

he does not exist for himself ? It matters not if he does not exist. But I ask, who is it that affirms the negative ? He who is himself non-existent cannot affirm or deny anything.

At the time of the happening of that cause which gives fatherhood to man and motherhood to woman, the child exists in the atoms of semen and blood. He does not see that incident. Why do you, then, without visual evidence on your part and on the faith of others' words, believe that those who are called your father and mother are such ? Maybe on principle you will object and say that you do not believe in that also. On rare occasions a real cause may exist for this unbelief. But, being a man, can you boldly assert it ? Are we to suppose that every father and mother in the world is subject to such a doubt ? Such a statement, even if one were able to make it, would be nothing but the raving of a madman. I have no objection to your doubting the eighty-four lakhs of births. But I say in that case let it be strictly a doubt. Do not bring it under the category of things certain. For the doubt is whether the eighty-four lakhs of births exist or not, and no doubt can exist without a knowledge of either existence or non-existence. There can never be a doubt about the existence of that which you know to be non-existent. It does not exist. This is not a doubt, but a certainty. This is why I said that, should you be doubtful, say that you do not know whether the eighty-four lakhs of births exist or not. To arrive at once at the conclusion that they do not exist because it is doubtful whether they do exist is but a shocking manifestation of ignorance. In our discussion upon reincarnation we will set ourselves to dispel this doubt. Here we shall say this much—that when the number of eighty-four lakhs is definitely given, it would be wise to believe in it. Of him who does not admit the fact of reincarnation in any manner, whether partly or incompletely, directly or indirectly, I ask : "Are the eighty-four lakhs

of births mentioned in the religious book of any other religious community of any country of which we know the history ?" Can either the philosophy of Chârvâka,[1] or the Koran or Bible, proclaim boldly that the Jîva takes eighty-four lakhs of births ? Whose sight can stretch to the extremity of the universe, so as to be able to penetrate through the molecules and atoms of the fourteen worlds—namely, Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svah, Mahah, Janah, Tapah, Satala, Bitala, Sutala, Talâtala, Rasâtala, Mahâtala, and Pâtâla,[2] and thus gaining knowledge of the nature of every Jîva with grave solemnity affirm and say: "Jîva has eighty-four lakhs of births. True, true, true again—true, there is no doubt." Not to speak of pointing this out, how can one even boldly say that the number of births is eighty-four lakhs ? The Jîva, through change of the curtain of memory in every birth, forgets its previous birth. Its memory is opened and closed. It is not, then, within its power of intelligence to say with certainty, either by philosophy, science, perception, or inference, that the number of births is eighty-four lakhs. Only that Dharma and that Ṣhâstra can affirm this, which takes its birth in the heart whose substance is will of Her who is the infinite and eternal Intelligence,[3] who dwells in the heart of all Jîvas who are manifested with Her breath.[4] Who can measure the extent of the births of the Jîva but that Ṣhâstra which has emanated from the mouth of Ânandamayî[5] Herself, at whose feet this small world is but a plaything for Her eternal play ? It is only that Ṣhâstra which dances with joy at the sight of the play of creation,

[1] Sceptic and atheist.

[2] The worlds from Bhuh (the earth) to Satyaloka are the upper world, and from Atala to Pâtâla the nether worlds, which according to some accounts must be distinguished from the Hells, which lie between earth and the nether world.

[3] Chaitanya—the supreme is Sat (existence), chit (intelligence, consciousness), and Ânanda (bliss). The Devî is Chinmayî (Lalitâ, third hundred).

[4] The world is the out-breathing of the Supreme.

[5] A title of Devî, whose substance is bliss (see note 3).

preservation, and destruction taking place at every twinkling of the eye which can boldly assert that the number of births is eighty-four lakhs. If other Ṣhâstras be astounded, let them remain so. You and I have no need to faint away on hearing that. At present merely understand this much: that as he who can count a thousand has surely known the mathematical sign for that number, so he who can assert the number of eighty-four lakhs of births has surely seen them.

Reasoning on the Scripture.

You may have heard that a reasonable saying should be accepted even from a boy, and that discussion without reasoning causes loss of Dharma. But perhaps you have not had the leisure to discern what is the subject of that reasoning, and what kind of reasoning it is. The reasoning by which the Ṣhâstra asks you to discuss is that reasoning which is within the control of your intellect—the reasoning of practical Ṣhâstras helpful to discussion. How can you, with worldly reasoning, prove the truth of that unworldly spiritual Ṣhâstra which, if studied and followed with constancy, will develop the intellect and will, and when Siddhi is attained by such Sâdhana, open the portals of the super-sensual principle[1] which is within you? Do not lament because you have intellect, nor be ashamed because you cannot come to any decision without it. It is true that you have an intellect, but the pity of it is that you have not the intelligence to understand what sort of intellect it is. You may feel sorry and ashamed, but that will not open the lock. If you put too much pressure, the key will be broken, and even a Bengal lock[2] will not open. This is why I was saying that if you proceeded to open the lock of spiritual principles with the key of worldly reasoning, even the

1 Atîndriya tattva.

2 That is, locks manufactured in Bengal, which are (or were) of inferior quality.

play of native intelligence will cease, and, being unable what to decide, you will find yourself at loss in everything.[1] For this reason the Ṣhâstra has, after careful consideration, and taking the oath upon its head, said: "Do not attempt to deal by argument with things which are beyond the range of thought."

What, again, may be asked, is the necessity for a Ṣhâstra, in respect of a matter which you and I can decide by argument and discussion? That is called Ṣhâstra which deals with things beyond the reach of the senses, which are unthought of, unseen, and unattained by you and me. Where direct vision is blind and inference lame, there Ṣhâstra alone reigns supreme. The fact that you and I have got eyes does not enable you and I to see what the animals moving in the unfathomable depths of ocean see. The power of sight is different in that kingdom from ours. You and I are blind in this respect, despite our eyes. Similarly you and I have not the privilege to behold that which the Ṛishis, seers of deep truths immersed in the Divine bliss,[2] have seen.

Many people are heard to say in argument as follows: "How can those whose minds are constantly occupied with the thought of the feet of the Devatâ of their heart in Nirvikalpa Samâdhi Yoga,[3] by the complete immersal of their own mind and Prakṛiti[4] in Paramâtmâ,[5] find time to observe also the physical principles[6] governing the molecules and atoms[7] of the untold millions of universes,[8] each of which is composed of fourteen worlds? How, again, can Yogis,[9] Ṛishis, and Munis,[10] whose state is one in which the illusion of a dual existence disappears through their acquirement of non-dualistic truth,[11] find

[1] Literally, "to fall off from here and be lost from there.
[2] Brahmânanda.
[3] Ecstasy. See Introduction.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] The Supreme Spirit.
[6] Vastutattva.
[7] Anu and paramânu.
[8] Brahmâṇḍa. "Egg of Brahma."
[9] Adepts in Yoga (see Introduction).
[10] Seers and Sages.
[11] Advaita tattva.

time to turn their eyes from Brahman to observe the Brahmâṇḍa?"[1] Brahman, you say, cannot be seen unless the Brahmâṇḍa is forgotten. The Brahmâṇḍa cannot be seen unless the Brahman is forgotten. You argue, therefore, that it is impossible to harmonize these two mutually conflicting statements. We, too, do not deny the difficulty, and, although this is not the place for an elaborate explanation, we will briefly refer to one point.

Poets have said that if a pearl and a javâ[2] flower are brought together, the red hue of the javâ will redden the pearl, but the white lustre of the latter will not whiten the former. This is because the pearl is free of all impurity,[3] while the javâ is not so. A thing which is naturally transparent will take the reflection of other things, whilst that which is not so may itself be reflected but cannot receive reflection. For instance, my face is reflected in a mirror, but the mirror is not reflected in my face, because the mirror is pure, which my face is not. Similarly in a Brahmâṇḍa made impure by Mâyâ,[4] everything is impure. Only that one Brahman who is beyond Mâyâ is pure. The impure Brahmâṇḍa cannot receive a reflection of the pure Brahman, but is itself naturally reflected in it.

Looking at a spot of ground on the bank of some lake or river, we see only the verdant land and clumps of trees, but not the stretch of water. Yet the instant we withdraw our sight from the bank and cast it on the water, we see everything therein—the trunks, the tops, the branches, twigs, fruits, and flowers of the trees, and their very roots, together with the verdant land on which they stand. We see also the immense zone of the firmament covered with countless clusters of stars. We thus see all

[1] Universe. [2] The scarlet hibiscus, the flower of the Tântriks.

[3] Literally, "is dirtless."

[4] Illusion, the power of the Supreme whereby It makes Itself to appear other than It really is. Mâyâ enshrouds and conceals the nature of the Âtman.

things one after another displayed in the lake. But that which faces upwards on land faces downwards in the water, and that which faces downwards on land faces upwards in the water. Similar is the vision of those who are immersed in the sea of truth.[1] Just as we can see everything up to the very zone of the firmament merely by looking at the water of the lake and without casting our eyes around it, so the Ṛishis, without glancing at the Brahmâṇḍa produced by Mâyâ, cast their vision upon Brahmamayî,[2] and see in Her person whose substance is a mass of conscious bliss[3] endless millions of worlds in the hollow of every hair of Her body,[4] now appearing and now disappearing in each twinkling of the eyes, as it were bubbles in water. No need is there for them to take any wearying journey, nor to waste their lives, nor to pass over the courtyard[5] of the world so hard to traverse. But they merely, by the eye of wisdom,[6] in the bed of meditation,[7] in the house of Sâdhana, see that beauteous dream of the three worlds, and that truth[8] to which the Jîva cannot attain even in its causal body, and which, notwithstanding the break of ecstasy,[9] they cannot forget. Their vision has, however, this peculiarity:—whatever you and I, acquainted with the scientific truths of the gross world, see and think of appears to us to be elevated and of uplifted face, as if nothing else in the sangsâra was more elevated than they; but, on the other hand, the

[1] Tattva. [2] The Devî. [3] Chidghanânanda.

[4] The Kâmika is quoted as saying that there are 224 worlds, which should be meditated upon as if they were the hairs on the body of the Lord. This is the Bhuvana method. Others are the "letter" method of meditation on the fifty letters, as on the skin of the Lord of Devas; the Mantra method of meditation on the blood of Ṣhiva by means of Mantra; the "word" method, where they stand for the flesh of the bloodvessels of the Lord; and the "Tattva" method, where the thirty-six Tattvas, beginning with the earth, are the forms of Ṣhiva's sinews, bone, and marrow (see Bhashkararâya Commentary, Lalitâ, v. 52).

[5] That is, the surface. [6] Jnâna.

[7] Dhyâna (see Introduction). [8] Tattva. [9] Samâdhi.

devotees, looking at the reflection cast upon the waves of blood of the causal sea in the womb of Bhagavatî, perceive that that which is elevated in this world is low at the feet of Brahmamayî, and that whatever was downcast in the world has, on approaching the Mother, received Her caress and joyfully lifted its head on seeing the Brahman aspect of Ânandamayî. The same things are there in both cases. What was seen on land appears again in water, but reversed through change of the medium through which we view it. For those who only see the Brahmâṇḍa in the Brâhmâṇḍa, what can be higher to them than it? But those who have seen the Brahmâṇḍa in Brahman have seen the Queen of Queens, Brahmamayî, sitting on a throne made of all the highest things of the Brahmâṇḍa from the regions of the pole star, moon, and Brahmâ[1] to the cloud-piercing peak of Mount Sumeru[2] on earth. Seeing that all-pervading[3] play of Ṣhakti which makes the universe stare with wonder, Devas and Ṛishis have bowed their heads to earth, and said: "Obeisance, obeisance to the Devî who, as consciousness,[4] pervades the entire universe."

"Is it necessary to say, O great Devî, that She lives in the bodies of all living creatures when She is present in the form of energy,[5] even in such lifeless things as stocks and stones? There is no place in the world where the substance of Mahâmâyâ is not."

Man, how dare we expect that that divine[6] sight of theirs and this carnal[7] sight of yours and mine will be the same? The Ṣhâstra says that this play of the universe is nothing but the play of the waves in the sea of consciousness. Just as those who have gone to the sea, need, in looking at the sea, make no special effort to see its waves, so those who had seen Brahmamayî had not to

[1] Dhruvaloka, Chandraloka, and Brahmaloka.
[2] Mount Meru, wherein is the pole of the earth.
[3] Virât Tattva. [4] Chaitanya.
[5] Tejas, which also denotes fire, brilliancy, glory, and energy.
[6] Daivî. [7] Jaivi, or sight pertaining to the Jîva.

make any effort to see the Brahmâṇḍa. They did not see the universe with the help of telescopes or of vehicles on land, in water, or in air. When they saw the Îshvarî[1] of the universe it was then they saw the latter[2] also resting at Her feet. The difference between the sight of those who nowadays display their knowledge of science by a discussion of the principles of matter[3] and that of the Ṛishis is this:—The former, in their short lives having seen but a small portion of the small world, gasp out with tired voices: "Who knows what lies beyond this?" However, on seeing this world-play, one only feels that wonderful indeed must be the nature[4] of the real form of Her whose play it is, and that if one would have knowledge of that wonderful Ṣhakti,[5] there are no better means in human life than to study the principles of the universe. It is here that Ṛishis are wont to say that this sport is nothing wonderful for Her who is full of eternal and ever-novel play. The playful manifestation in the molecules and atoms of a single world counts for an incident scarcely worth mention for Her upon whose mere glance[6] depend the creation, preservation, and destruction of countless millions of universes. The universe does not appear wonderful in the sight of him who has seen the primordial Ṣhâkti,[7] the source of birth of this perfect play. And therefore the Ṛishis, disregarding the Ṣangsâra with its charming display of actors and acting, have sunk in the fathomless sea of the ocean of Her who, holding the thread of the universe in Her hand, makes all those actors act. They, after an attentive view and the attainment of Siddhi, have thrown up their hands, and cried and said: "Do not let your mind and heart be charmed with

[1] Feminine of Îṣhvara (Lord). Title of the Devî.
[2] Tattva.
[3] Bhutatattva. The Bhuta are the elements.
[4] Tattva.
[5] Power.
[6] "The series of worlds arise and disappear with the opening and shutting of Her eyes" (Lalitâ Sahasraranâma, v. 66).
[7] Âdyâ Ṣhâkti the Devî as primordial source and manifestation of the Divine energy.

the varied beauty of this world. This pleasant illusion will not last for ever. As you hope for peace, surrender your mind and heart at the lovely lotus-feet of Ânandamayî playing on the breast of Sadânanda.[1] Cast off the threefold sorrow,[2] and you will then discover that millions of worlds move and move around every petal, every filament, every particle of pollen, of those lotus feet, and then disappear immersed in the love-pollen of those lotuses."

To our ears these words, though true, appear somewhat strange. To disregard the joys and sorrows of the visible world, and to be immersed in the joy of the unseen Brahman, is a remote affair. For the present anyone who avers it seems to be an unsocial, witless fellow. This advice to run in search of something unseen, in disregard of the visible phenomenal sangsâra, is thought to be as unbearable and inopportune as would be flippant talk to a person who, disconsolate and with flooding tears, is holding his dead child to his breast, or as would be a request to accompany a funeral procession to a young man adorned and joyful on his way to his marriage. Owing to the unacceptable nature of the advice, you and I consider the adviser mad; but the latter is not to be put off from his purpose by that.

Let us suppose that you and I do not know what acting is, but are present at a representation of the Râmâyaṇa. The grief of Kauṣhalyâ, the death of Daṣharatha, the lamentation of Sîtâ, the tears of Mandodarî, move us to profuse tears. On the other hand, the heroic valour of Lakshmaṇa, the world-subduing military skill of Râmachandra, the pride of Indrajit, the war-cries of Râvaṇa, fill us now with joy and delight, now with fear, astonishment, and awe. At the same time we observe that someone who is sitting in our midst, but whom we do not know, has been shaking his sides with laughter at the very same

[1] Ṣhiva the ever Joyful.

[2] Tâpatraya (see p. 50, *post*).

scenes. You and I will probably say that the man is mad, but that will not stop his laughter. I say that it does not matter whether or not you call the man mad. Still you ought to reflect why the man laughs. The place is the same, the scenes are the same, the subject is the same. But while all other people are laughing at one time and weeping at another, why does that one man alone constantly laugh ? If we seek to know why this is so, we shall discover that there is only one cause for the laughing and weeping, and it is this:—You and I have come to see the play without either knowing how to act or what acting is. But that man has come to it with the full knowledge of what acting is. To us Râma and Râvaṇa appear as real, and so we make a great display of weeping, and so on. But that man sees that Nîlâmbara Chakravarti[1] is playing the part of Râvaṇa and that Pîtâmbara Chakravarti[1] is crying in the part of Sîtâ. What to our eyes are Râma and Sîtâ to him are Nîlâmbara and Pîtâmbara, and so he is full of laughter. We become restless at the sight of the incidents in the play, but that man who sees what is at the back of them is calm. We are calling him mad, but you may be certain that he is forgiving us on account of our ignorance. The man whom we slight by repeatedly referring to him as "that man, that man," is not mad. From the spiritual point of view, he it is who is possessed of the highest wisdom, and is the crest-gem of the race of devotees. He who knows that all things on the stage of Sangsâra are merely the materials for the play is not, on seeing the performance, charmed with the acting, but is intoxicated with the blissful love of the actor and actress whose acting it is. Ṛishis, though calm, are yet maddened by that love; and so they have told us not to waste this human birth, which is so difficult of attainment, by thinking of the little things of the Sangsâra, but to think that thought only which will save us from all further thinking. And,

[1] "Monsieur un tel."

so speaking to himself, the Sâdhaka has thus expressed the purpose of his heart:

"The time of life (Kâla) is past, death (Kâla) approaches; let me repair to solitude."

In deep seclusion let me sing the glory of Kâlakâminî.[1]

The day upon which you and I shall be on their side, and shall believe or attain the fitness for believing their word, on that day all thinking will be at an end. And we, too, shall understand that the Sangsâra is but a mock representation, and that both the things we see, as well as the people themselves who see, are She, the Brahmamayî,[2] full of the bliss of the mass of consciousness who has entered the Sangsâra as Jîva, and is revelling in this joyous play. But because you and I have not eyes to see, we say:

"What sort of a play is this of yours, O Mother? It is not a play, but the very father of imprisonment.
The first scene of the play is a gathering on the stage before the actor and actress.
Here the actor is nowhere to be found, so who can find the actress?
With the first act begins the play; next the scenes of a drama are required.
Here, be it the first act or the last, from beginning to end, the drama is full of scenes.
The scene in which the son appears is that in which the father disappears.
Instantly the curtain is dropped before the eye, and then who is the son, and who is the father?"

You and I have restless hearts, and so we become disconsolate with weeping. But the very same play raises waves of love in the heart of a calm devotee. Kamalâkânta, the peaceful Sâdhaka, has therefore sung as follows:

"You know not, O mind, the highest cause
Ṣhyâmâ[2] is not always in the form of a woman.
At times assuming the colour of clouds,

[1] Shiva's spouse. [2] The Devî.

She takes on the form of a man.
With dishevelled hair and sword in hand,
She strikes terror into the hearts of the sons of Danu.
At times She comes to the city of Vraja,[1] and, playing on the flute, captures the hearts of the women of Vraja.
At times, holding the three guṇas,[2] She creates, preserves, and destroys.
Oh! She binds Herself[3] with her own Mâyâ.[4]
The sufferings of the world She Herself endures.
In whatsoever form one thinks of Her in that form, She grants one's desires.
In a lotus in the lake of Kamalâkânta's heart She appears."

It is for this, I was saying, that in what the Ṣhâstra has said there is nothing to discuss, but there is ground for faith. Of Her to whom the Ṣhâstra belongs, the Ṛishis have said that that eternal highest Vidyâ,[5] who is the sole first cause in sangsâra both of bondage and liberation, is the creatrix of all creators.[6] The creative power of none surpasses Her who is the creatrix of all creators. Whether you and I understand it or not, the unfailing wheel of state of that Queen of Queens,[7] whose substance is will, is sure to turn in eighty-four lakhs of births of the Jîva. Should you ever after this ask why it should be so, and what is the reason for it, I shall not in reply need to say much, but will simply put you this question:—What reason is there which establishes that the present birth has at all taken place? At base the reasoning is the same for all births. For reasoning which establishes this birth establishes that which follows it. If one section of a wheel turns, all sections turn at the same

[1] That is, in the form of Kṛishṇa.

[2] That is, the three "qualities" which form the substance of Prakṛiti,—namely, sattva, rajas, tamas (see Introduction).

[3] That is, in the person of Jîva.

[4] Power of illusion.

[5] The Devî.

[6] Îṣhvarî of all Îṣhvaras.

[7] Râjrâjeṣhvarî.

time. This is the law of Her nature. From Brahman, the Jîva who is His avatâra has come into this sangsâra. There after wanderings and wanderings, it will again assume the aspect of Brahman and be absorbed in the Parabrahman. This is the natural law in the world of Jîvas. In our discourse on the principles of reincarnation, we will enter into a detailed explanation as to the law under which, and the process by which, this will be accomplished.

Should, even after this, anyone say, "Everything ends with death. Who will then be born again?" to him also we shall explain in that discourse that he is probably ignorant of what life and death mean. He who knows the nature of life knows also that Jîva has no real death except that in Nirvâṇa.[1] What you and I speak of as death is but the death of the mind, and not the death of Jîva. In short, just as it is impossible to make a complete survey of a life in its various stages of boyhood, youth, manhood, old age, and so forth, so also it is impossible to judge of the justice or injustice of eighty-four lakhs of births, or even the justice or injustice of any single birth—which forms but a fraction of the entire life of a Jîva. Bhagavân Râmachandra, crest-gem of the race of Raghu,[2] after killing all Râkshasas[3] in Vishvâmitra's yajna,[4] threw Mârîcha with the force of his arrows to the other side of the sea. On hearing this, a short-sighted, restless man might easily form the idea that Râmachandra felt weak after slaying so large a number of Râkshasas, and thus, while able with such strength as he still retained to throw Mârîcha to a great distance from the seat of the sacrifice, was yet unable to kill him. But he who has read the whole of the Râmâyaṇa from the Ayodhyâkâṇḍa to the Araṇyakâṇḍa[5] knows that Mârîcha reappears in the guise of a deer in the forest of Daṇḍaka

[1] When the Jîva ceases to exist *as such*.

[2] The solar race, celebrated in the Raghuvangsha.

[3] Demons.

[4] Sacrifice.

[5] The titles of the first and last parts of the Râmâyana epic.

at the time of Sîtâ's abduction and has at the same time understood whether Râmachandra had strength or not. Bhagavân, dweller in Vaikunṭha, who ever relieves the burden of earth, there incarnated to carry out the work of the Devas—the killing of Râvaṇa. It was because he knew that the work of destroying Râvaṇa would, later on, have to be commenced through the same Mârîcha, that Râmachandra, instead of killing him, threw him to the other side of the sea. Had this not been so, no greater effort would have been needed to send Mârîcha to the other side of the sea of existence[1] than to send him to the other side of the salt sea. To understand the deep mysteries underlying this play of Bhagavân, the dweller in hearts, it is necessary to know the incidents of the Araṇykâṇḍa; otherwise I should not understand more than this—that the Almighty had not sufficient strength in His body to enable Him to kill Mârîcha.

Similarly, in order to judge of His justice or injustice towards Jîva in the Satya and Kali ages, I must know the history of all the ages to their final chapter, Brahmakaivalya or Nirvâṇa. Then only can be considered the justice and injustice of the entire existence of Jîva It is therefore the height of impudence to judge the justice of Her who is the eternal ever-present truth by a life of forty years' duration. If we are to judge His justice upon the strength of reasoning alone, why should we not suppose that it is the sâdhakas of the Satya, Tretâ, and Dvâpara ages who failed to acquire Siddhi and have therefore been reborn in the Kali age through the revolution of the wheel of time, and the attraction of the mass of their religious merits. This mass, which is nearly ripe, is about to bear fruit through the opportunities offered by place, time, and person. They, the children of the Mother, will again get up on Her lap. You say that Siddhi has been attained in one age, but I see that Siddhi has been attained in Kali, the fourth age, after austerities

[1] Bhâvasamudra.

which have extended over three ages. The jack-fruit which ripens in the month of Ashâḍha does not first grow in that month. It first grows in winter, increases in spring, and matures in summer. The bael fruit first grows in the month of Chaitra. It also ripens in Chaitra. From this fact a European eating the fruit, but who had never seen it growing, might draw the conclusion that the growth, death, and final dissolution of a bael fruit all took place in one and the same month; but a descendant of the Âryyas living in India knows that:

"In the month of Chaitra the bael grows
In the month of Chaitra it ripens.
In one Chaitra it grows,
But in another Chaitra it ripens."

ON MEETING SÂDHAKAS.[1]

You may ask, "Why, then, is the number of Sâdhakas so small in the Kali age?" But I reply: "Who says that it is small?" You may rejoin that if the number be not small, why do we not see them everywhere, in every village, in every city? I, however, say that the population of a country may be considered to be small if people are not seen everywhere in it, but the number of Sâdhakas cannot on similar grounds be so considered. It has been already stated that the Creatrix of the universe, incarnated as Daughter, told Her father that "one in a thousand struggle for Siddhi, and perhaps only one amongst such thousand knows me in my true aspect." The same was said[2] to Arjuna by Bhagavân, the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. She has again said: "It is only on attaining Siddhi after many births that Jîva reaches the highest station." Again: "Jîva attains to me only upon the acquisition of knowledge after many births." In the Niruttara Tantra

1 A Sâdhaka is he who does sâdhana (see Introduction), a devotee.
2 In the Bhagavadgîtâ.

it is said: "The root of knowledge is that which relates to the union of Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti. Knowledge of Ṣhakti is acquired after many births. O Devî, without a knowledge of Ṣhakti, Nirvâṇa can never be attained."

How, then, dare you and I expect to see crowds of travellers upon a road on which the Ṣhâstra says they are so very scarce. There is a full number of Sâdhakas even should but one man in a hundred thousand become such. Wise men have said that a ruby is not to be had in every hill, and that every elephant's head does not contain a pearl. A saint[1] is not to be met with everywhere, and sandal does not grow in every forest. Bhagavân Ṣhrî Kṛishṇa told Uddhava, crest-gem of devotees, that when a Muni[2] passes who is calm, free of malice, and equal mind he follows him, hoping to be sanctified by the touch of the dust of his feet. What impurity could attach to Him, the utterance of Whose name by a devotee sanctifies the three worlds,[3] so that He should need to purify Himself by touching the dust of the latter's feet? It was no impurity, but intoxication caused by love for the devotee, which led Bhagavân, in His desire to proclaim his greatness, to lose Himself, and to show that, were it possible for Him to be tainted with impurity, even He could regain purity by touching the devotee. Realize from this how rare a thing a true devotee is. Another Ṣhâstra has said: "As a cow runs after its calf, so Ṣhiva and Gaurî[4] run after him who repeats, 'Mahâdeva,[5] Mahâdeva, Mahâdeva.'" Why, what reason has the consort of Bhavânî,[6] the Creator of all, the shade of Whose feet supports the Brahmâṇḍa, to run after His devotees? The necessity was none other than that of showing that where there is a devotee there He Himself is.

[1] Sâdhu.

[2] A sage or saint. Uddhava, son of Devabhâga, was versed in Yoga.

[3] The earth, the upper and nether worlds.

[4] A name of Devî as spouse of Ṣhiva.

[5] "The great God" Ṣhiva. In the Ashṭamurti, Ṣhiva is so called in his form of the moon.

[6] A name of the Devî as spouse of Bhava (Shiva).

It is said in the Tantra that " all admit that the places of pilgrimage[1] are the cause of purity. But, O Girijâ,[2] in very truth, I say that it is the Sâdhaka of the Kulâchâra[3] rite who gives purity even to all such places of pilgrimage. Blessed is the mother[4] of a Kaula ![5] Blessed are his father and kinsmen and relatives ! Blessed are those who have conversed with him ! In heaven the ancestors of a master of Kula[6] sing : ' In our race will be born a master of Kula.' " In the Utpatti Tantra it is said : " Devî, wherever a Vîra[7] or a Divya[8] resides, there also are all the sacred shrines.[9] O Thou who art desired of the Vîra, there is no doubt that a Vîra, though having a human body, is in flesh and blood a Devatâ[10] ând Ṣhiva Himself. O Devî, what fear can he have who lives where a Vîra lives, and under his protection ? The protection of a worldly[11] Vîra relieves us of worldly fear, but the protection of the spiritual[12] Vîra relieves one of the fear of famine, disease, the king, and death. It relieves of the three forms of fear—namely, that which arises from troubles of the body, senses, and mind ;[13] from external material objects;[14] and from all superhuman beings."[15]

1 Tîrtha, holy shrines, such as Gaya, or the temple of Juggernath at Puri, with which India is studded.

2 Daughter of the mountain—a title of the Devî as daughter of the Mountain King.

3 The way of the Kaulas, one of the divisions of Tântrik worshippers.

4 The mother is always, by way of honour, placed first and before the father.

5 One who follows Kulâchâra (see Introduction).

6 One who is versed in Kulâchâra.

7 Men are by the Tantras divided into three classes or temperaments: Pashu ("animal"), in whom the dark, inert quality (Guṇa) of tamas predominates, and who is bound by the bonds; Vîra (hero), or those in whom the active quality (rajas) prevails; and divya (celestial), in whom the pure (Sattva) quality prevails. Worship varies, and is adapted to the temperament of the worshipper (see Introduction).

8 See last note.

9 Tîrtha (see note 1).

10 Deva (see Introduction). The Vira here referred to is the Siddha Vira.

11 Laukika, or hero in the ordinary English sense.

12 Pâramârthika.

13 Âdhyâtmika.

14 Âdhibhautika—*e.g.*, fear of injury from the elements or other men.

15 Âdhidaivika, such as Devas, ghosts, demons, etc.

In the Kulârṇava Tantra[1] it is said:

"My beloved, in all the world the sight of a Kulâchâryya[2] is indeed rare, and is only obtained after enjoyment of the fruits of a vast heap of religious merit." Should even a Chaṇḍâla[3] or a person of still lower caste become attached to Kuladharma,[4] then the very memory of him, the recitation of his name and qualities, the singing of his praises, sight of, and talk with him purifies a Jîva. "O noble lady, you and I for ever reside there where he who has a knowledge of Kulâchâra lives. It is not on Mounts Kailâṣha[5] Sumeru.[6] or Mandâra[7] that I always live. I ever abide there where Sâdhakas versed in Kulatattva[8] are." (The meaning of this is that He would rather abandon his abode on these mountains than the companionship of Kaulikas.[9] The devoted Sâdhaka will know from this which is the greater—the glory of Mount Kailâṣha or that of a Kaula.) "The place where a great Tântrika[10] lives should be visited and seen with care, even if it should be remoter than the remote, for you and I live in joy there."

The meaning of this is: It may be asked why one should take so much trouble to see a man. Lest such an evil notion should seize the naturally weak heart of man, Bhagavân has clearly given us to understand that we should not desist from visiting a Kulasâdhaka, considering him to be a mere man. It is not a human body that the Kaulika possesses. The Ṣhiva Ṣhakti aspect[11] is that of which the Kaulikas are worshippers, and is that which the world is so eager to behold. In that aspect Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti unite and, as Ardhanârîṣhvara,[12] live in the enjoy-

[1] Chap. ix.

[2] Master of Kaula doctrine.

[3] One of the lowest castes, rag-pickers, cleaners of privies, etc.

[4] The Dharma or doctrine of the Kaulas, a division of Tântrik worshippers (see Introduction).

[5] The paradise of Ṣhiva.

[6] *Vide ante*, and chap. ii., Vishṇu Purâṇa. The Devî is Merunilayâ (residing on Mount Meru) (Lalitâ S., v. 148). The Shrîchakra has, it is said, three aspects—Bhûmi, Kailâṣha, Meru; the last being when it is identified with the sixteen Nitya Deities.

[7] Used as a staff to churn the Ocean for Amṛita.

[8] Kaula knowledge

[9] Kaulas.

[10] Mahâpurusha.

[11] Mûrti, or form.

[12] The bisexual form of Îṣhvara.

ment of perfect joy in the body of the Kulasâdhaka. To see him, therefore, is the same as seeing Their undivided and united form.

"If a Guru of Kulatattva lives even afar, visit him, but not a Paṣhu,[1] even if he be near." By the term "Kaulika," worshippers should understand a Sâdhaka of Kulâchâra,[2] the characteristics of which we shall explain in our discourse on Achâratattva. By Paṣhu is meant a person bound by the eight fetters of shame, etc.[3] "Sacred is the land in which a master of Kula is born. By seeing and honouring a Kaulika one gives deliverance to thrice seven generations."

"Seeing a master of Kula born in their family and living in their house, his ancestors in heaven say, 'At length we shall obtain the highest abode.' As cultivators with craving eyes pray for rain, so the ancestors in heaven pray with eager hearts that a son or grandson of their family may be initiated in the truths of Kula doctrine. Then blessed will that sinless great man be in Sangsâra."

"Beloved after death, masters in Kula joyfully come to me. When a great Kaulika comes to the Kaulika house,[4] Yoginîs,[5] with Yogis, come to see and welcome him." "Even Pitṛis and Devatâs seek the protection and pay homage to the great Kaula Yogî. And for this great men devoted to the knowledge of Kula should be honoured and worshipped."

"Devî, such sinful men as after the adoration of Thyself fail to worship Thy devotees never win favour of Thee."

"When Sâdhakas place the Naivedya[6] before me, I

1 *Vide ante*, p. 50, note 5, and *post*. See Introduction.

2 One and the highest division of Tântrik worshippers, whose way of life (āchâra) is according to Kula doctrine.

3 See Introduction. The reference is to the classification of the Kulârṇava Tantra. The "afflictions" which are variously numbered, are given as five in the Linga Purâṇa. The Devî Bhâg. Pr. says: "In the knower of truth they sleep. In the Yogis they are burned up. In those attached to the world they arise unimpeded.

4 That is, to Ṣhiva's abode.

5 Female yogis.

6 A full plate of offerings to the Deva, consisting of rice, ghee, vegetables, honey, etc.

accept it by sight only. But, O lotus eyed, I eat it by the mouths of the saintly devotees."

"Devî, there is no doubt that if one worships Thy devotee he worships Me, so that he who would do that which is pleasing to Me adores Thy devotees only."

"Whatever is done in the name of Kula disciples is done in the name of Deva. All Devatâs love Kula. Therefore should Kaulikas be worshipped."

"Pârvatî, even if in any other place,[1] I am worshipped with great reverence, I am not so well pleased as when a great Kaulika is worshipped."

"The fruit which he cannot obtain even by pilgrimage, austerities,[2] gifts, sacrifices,[3] and voluntary religious practices,[4] that the Jîva can obtain by the worship of a Kaulika. O, Ambikâ,[5] even if a Kaulika (not to speak of any other) dishonours a master of Kaula, all his gifts, sacrifices, homas,[6] austerities, worship, and recitation of mantra[7] are of no avail."

As a reward for what religious merit can worldly creatures like you and I expect to meet those unworldly great men whose greatness the Shâstras have declared by lakhs of such evidence? To what hill, to what forest hermitage, to what great cremation ground, to what great shrine[8] have we been? In what Muni's hermitage,[9] in what saints'[10] humble abode, in what Daṇḍî's[11] maṭha,[12] in what Brahmachâri's[13] abode have we sought protection? What mantra have we recited according to the rules of Japa?[14] What Devatâ have we worshipped? In what Vrata[15] have we been initiated? Along what path have

[1] That is, than in the person of a great Kaulika.

[2] Tapasyâ (see Introduction).

[3] Yajna (*ibid.*).

[4] Vrata (*ibid.*). Voluntary, as distinguished from those which are obligatory (Nitya).

[5] Mother, title of the Devî (see p. 8, note 2, *ante*).

[6] The sacrifice made by pouring clarified butter into fire (see Introduction).

[7] Japa (see *ibid.*).

[8] Mahâpîṭha.

[9] See p. 49, note 2, *ante*.

[10] Sâdhu.

[11] A class of ascetics.

[12] Monastic institution.

[13] Celibate ascetic.

[14] See Introduction.

[15] *Ibid.*

we advanced? Restraint of mind and body, contentment, forbearance, meditation, concentration of thought and process towards ecstatic contemplation[1]—which of these have we practised? Listening,[2] thinking,[3] and constant meditation,[4] which of these have we done? Of discrimination,[5] dispassion,[6] what have we understood? In the name of Dharma open your heart and say, brother, what have we done to deserve to meet the saintly Sâdkakas whom even Devas rarely meet? You will say, maybe, we have not done anything, but still we honour and revere them, bow to them, and anxiously pray to meet them. That is not altogether untrue. We pray in our minds, but what of our actions? Had we acted, we should not have remained satisfied with mere prayer, but we should have run with passionate hearts without looking at the path, and having found him, we would have prostrated ourselves and clasped his feet, and said: "Lord, I have made no provision. How shall I be saved?" Say truly, O brother, has anyone's heart wept in this fashion? If it had, it would not have had to weep any more. The pious poet Dâṣharathi Ray has, on the subject of the coming[7] of the Mother of the world,[8] said:

"My child, the mother says, you will come to know.
You will no longer have to weep.
Incessant tears have brought an end to weeping.
The child who clings to and calls 'mother.'
That child holds the mother fast.
The mother is ashamed to let it weep.
Mother does not care for the children who mix with others
And go about laughing and playing.
She does not go to them and easily obtains leisure.
And takes the child who weeps on her lap."

[1] Samâdhi. [2] Ṣhravaṇa. [3] Manana.
[4] Nididhyâsana. [5] That is, between the real and the unreal
[6] Vairâgya: unattachment to worldly things.
[7] Âgamanî. [8] Jagadambâ, a title of the Devî.

O Thou who art full of mercy for the poor, tell me, O Mother, when will the day come for Thy Sâdhaka, when I shall weep as I ought to weep for Thee, the day on which Thou wilt come and say: "No longer weep. Incessant tears have brought an end to weeping?"

A patient in delirium suffering from Sânnipâtika fever[1] feels no sorrow. Hari, Hari,[2] shall we learn to weep? If, when we are at worldly work, anyone should happen to stand before us in the dress of a Sâdhaka, we instantly leave the work, and with all the frown and fury at our command, expel him from our house and then find peace. Being such as we are, will our sinful hearts weep to obtain Sâdhakas, instead of weeping for Hell. O thou Dweller in the Heart! O thou Saviour! Dost thou know, O Mother, how long it will be before we are delivered of this sin? With a heart such that the very attempt to speak of it makes me fear because of the fearful visions of sin which it raises before my eyes, I am prepared to dishonour Ṣhâstra, Sâdhu, and Dharma. With such a heart again I proceed to meet Sâdhus. How great is my shamelessness! To say that were there living any saintly Sâdhaka, he would surely one day or other meet me in my house, argues great vanity on my part. What a ridiculous display of impudent presumption! Why, what Indras, Chandras, Vâyus, or Varuṇas[3] have you and I become that we should meet Sâdhakas without having to stir from our houses? You will say, you have learning, wealth, and a following. You have. But what is that to the Sâdhaka? It is our mistake which leads us to tell him we have learning. Shall I speak of learning to him who, through the grace of Mahâvidyâ, holds the eight forms of Siddhi[4] in the palm of his hand? Shall I boast of my wealth to those who, possessing the

[1] A violent fever, said to affect the blood and produce delirium.
[2] Name of Vishṇu.
[3] Devas of the firmament, moon, wind, and water.
[4] The eight great powers, as to which see Introduction.

priceless wealth of the feet of Târâ,[1] consider even the position of an Indra as of no worth ? I want to show the strength of my following to the son of that Mother, Creatrix of all Whose very glance commands the service of everyone from Shangkara[2] Himself to the molecules and atoms of the Brahmânda ! How mighty is the strength of my intellect ! And even should we, whilst sitting at home, or going to places of pilgrimage, or moving about cremation grounds or places of execution, ever come across Sâdhakas, are we able to recognize them ? Have we come to know Devatâ because He is installed in every house ?[3] When, after killing Hiranyakashipu, Bhagavân Nrisinghadeva[4] wished to grant a boon to Prahlâda,[5] crest-gem of devotees, the latter at once said : " As worldly persons who are unable to discriminate the unreal from the real, form lasting attachments to wife, children, and other things, so often as they willingly or unwillingly constantly think of them, so may I constantly remember Thee. May my love for Thee never forsake me." Bhagavân, the abode of the supreme love, was then standing in a visible form before him, but yet Prahlâda did not say : " I want Thee." Without seeking Bhagavân himself, he prayed that he might have devotion towards Him. For, Prahlâda, the crest-gem of those who have true knowledge,[6] knew that the presence of Bhagavân was not rare, since He pervades the universe. He knew, however, that what is rare is devotion to His feet. To him who desires to possess devotion, the presence or absence of Bhagavân are the same, since there can be no realization of

[1] One of the ten great forms (Dasha Mahâvidyâ) of the Devî (see Dasha Mahâvidyâ, Upâsanâ Rahasya, by Prosanna Kumar Shastri).

[2] Shiva.

[3] Referring to the image (Pratimâ) installed in Hindu households.

[4] Vishnu in his man-lion incarnation, undertaken for the destruction of the atheist Hiranyakashipu, who had cruelly tortured his son Prahlâda because the latter was a devotee of Vishnu

[5] For his great devotion to the Deva.

[6] Literally, persons proficient in tattva.

Bhagavân without piety. But if a man have devotion, Bhagavân, even though he were at a distance of a hundred crore of yojanas,[1] must appear before him wherever, and in whatsoever form, he desires. Just as the water of a river when mingling with the sea cannot be distinguished from it ; so the existence of a devotee mingling with Bhagavân cannot be distinguished from Him. Just as the rare presence of Bhagavân is obtained through devotion, so pious men too, though rare in every place, are subject to control by love. Again, just as through want of piety we are a hundred yojanas from the presence of Bhagavân, though he is always before us, so we are unable to discern the real self of a saintly Sâdhaka, a devotee of Bhagavân, even if we meet him. We see with our physical eyes, but our eyes of wisdom are ever blind. The Tantra Ṣhâstra has said that he alone is dear to the Mother of the world,[2] whose heart naturally rejoices with love at the sight of Kulasâdhakas,[3] in the same way as the heart naturally rejoices at the sight of wife, children, and friends.

Now, to speak truly, do I look at Sâdhakas with eyes open with such joy and softened with such love ? If I did, how could my heart forsake their company and be charmed by that of kith and kin ? And why does my heart long for the latter even after I have seen a Sâdhu ? The reason is, that a saint is saintly, but my vision is unsaintly,[4] and is therefore a hindrance instead of being a help towards meeting Sâdhakas. Say now, is it not a great sin to think that there are no Sâdhakas merely because we do not see them in every city or village ? Whether we see them or not, do not widen your own path to Hell by saying that there are no Sâdhakas in the world. Do not also be astounded to hear that in the Kali age Sâdhakas who follow the Tântrik form of

[1] A crore is 10,000,000, and a yojana is about eight miles.
[2] Jagadambâ. [3] Worshippers according to Kulâchâra.
[4] A Sâdhu is Sâdhu, but the vision is Asâdhu.

worship attain Siddhi in one lifetime. At the very moment when you and I are virulently criticizing the subject of Sâdhakas, be sure that at that moment hundreds of Sâdhakas in the boundless kingdom of the universe are making their births blessed, their lives blessed, and the world blessed by clasping to their hearts the feet of Her who gives success to all purposes. Blessed are we who, being born in Bhâratavarsha,[1] made holy by the touch of their feet, are able to gratify ourselves by the taking of their names.

[1] India.

CHAPTER II

WHAT IS THE NECESSITY FOR THE TANTRAS WHEN THERE IS THE VEDA?

NOW we come to the doubt we have mentioned—namely: "Why, seeing that there is the Veda, was the Tantra Ṣhâstra created?" In the first place, we object to the objection itself. The question why the Tantra Ṣhâstra was created comes next. We ask why this question has arisen? Perhaps the modern educated community of fastidious critics will be astonished to hear us ask this question. The reason for their astonishment lies in our assertion that it is not possible that the Ṣhâstra should be created. The Ṣhâstra in our opinion is an eternal thing. I know that you will probably say: "What orthodoxy! what blindness! what shocking superstition!" It does not matter if you do. Just as it is blind faith to be partial to one side without heeding the reasons which really exist in favour of the other, so it is scepticism to rely on mistaken inferences in total disregard of the reasons which exist against them. In your opinion it is orthodoxy to speak of the Ṣhâstra as an unerring and eternal thing, but in mine it is scepticism to deny it. We shall therefore at once proceed to investigate that which, if disregarded, is scepticism, and if regarded, is orthodoxy.

In the first place the root and cause of dispute is that, while in your opinion the Ṣhâstra was prepared after a view of the world and in accordance with it, in my opinion the world was constructed on a view of the

Shâstra and in accordance with it. Consequently, while in your opinion man is the author of the Shâstra, in mine the Shâstra has no author but only revealers—namely, Brahmâ, Vishnu, and Maheshvara,[1] and after them the succession of Rishis. To this perhaps the philosophic Pandits of our own country will take some exception. For they not improbably have heard, or read in the Veda, that the Veda,[2] Vedânga,[3] and Vedânta[4] all emanated from the mouth of Parameshvara Himself. We do not deny this, but would point out that the very Veda which they know to be the language of Parameshvara has been described to be Brahman Itself by its Revealers, those three most worshipful Devas.

In the Vrihannîla Tantra[5] it is said:

"Daughter of the mountain! know the Veda to be Brahman Itself. The Veda has no author, but is self-manifested. Of yore the Veda was sung by Bhagavân to Svayambhû Brahmâ.[6] From Mahâdeva Himself[7] to the Rishis all are, age after age, the remembrancers of the Veda, but none is its author."

The Shâstra says that the Rig Veda and other Vedas come out with the breath of Brahmâ. Many consider this to be strong evidence of Parameshvara's authorship of the Veda. But it is not that, but evidence of the revelation of the Veda. Because the Veda was breathed out by Brahmâ, it does not follow that He was its author, for no one is the author of his own breath. We are simply instruments of inspiration. None of us is their creator. For he who can create breath is indestructible even in the great dissolution of things.[8] Brahmâ's body, unlike our own, is not made of gross matter consisting

[1] Shiva.

[2] The scriptures of the Hindus—Rig, Yajur, Sâma, and Atharva Vedas. It has been said that the Tantra is a fifth Veda.

[3] See pp. 110, 111, *post.*

[4] Doctrine of the Vedas (Upanishads): the subject of the philosophy (darshana) so named.

[5] See also Rudra Yâmala, chap. iv.

[6] The self-born.

[7] Shiva.

[8] Mahâpralaya.

of the five elements. That body of His is all Himself, full of the play of eternal consciousness. It is some particular part of Himself which has emanated from Him as Veda in the form of breath. This is why the Ṣhâstra has said: "Daughter of the mountain, know the Veda to be Brahmâ Himself."

Bhagavân, though capable of creating all things, is incapable of creating another like Himself—that is, something which is not Him but is yet similar to Him. Râma, Kṛishṇa, Gangâ, Vishṇu, Durgâ, Kâlî, whomsoever you may mention, all are Himself. You cannot point to anyone who is different from, and yet is alike, Him. Had there been, or could have been, another like Him, he would never have been sole Mistress[1] without a second.[2] As I can only appear and disappear with my own selfness, but cannot create another like myself, so Brahmâ, too, cannot create the Veda, which is but another aspect of Himself. He merely reveals the Veda as His expiration at the beginning of creation, and withdraws it as His inspiration at the time of the great dissolution. The Ṣhâstra has therefore said: "In respect of the sayings of a man, it is permissible to inquire whether there be error or not, but in the case of the Veda, as it has no author, the question of error does not arise at all."

Here someone may say that, if that be so, Parameṣhvara's creation itself is an impossibility, for if you and I, and every other Jîva are all He, whom then does He create? If, however, creation by Brahman becomes impossible, we are not at all afraid. Why should the descendants of Âryyas be astonished to hear that "there is no creation," when all his Ṣhâstras freely say that, in a real spiritual sense, there is no creation, preservation and destruction by Brahmâ, all such being a mere illusive display? As a matter of fact, although in a real sense there is no creation, yet for us Jîvas subject to

[1] Adhîṣhvarî. [2] Advitîya.

Mâyâ, of which we are the product, creation undoubtedly exists. But the Veda was not created even in the sense of that which we call creation. Just as Râma, Kṛishṇa, and the other incarnations are the eternal Brahman, so is the Veda. Just as It, although self-manifest, manifested Itself in the womb of Kaushalyâ[1] or Devakî[2] by means of its Mâyâ; so also the Veda, though self-manifest, appeared in the heart of Bhagavân, and came out with His breath at the will of Her whose very substance is will. The Vedas, Purâṇas Tantras, and other Ṣhâstras, are self-manifest and self-evident. Language, which is the gross form of sound, is its own author.[3] It matters very little if at the first hearing these things seem impossible. In our discussion as to the principles of Mantra, we shall proceed to decide this point according to the Ṣhâstras. For the moment the Sâdhaka will excuse me a few intervening Chapters.

Here let us understand what harm will result if the Dharma Ṣhâstra of the Âryyas is supposed to be of human origin. What is that defect for fear of which it has been declared to be self-manifest and emanant with the breath of Îṣhvara? We reply not for fear of any defect. The Veda is called self-manifest because it is so. It is not for fear of darkness that we admit the fact that light gives lustre. Whether darkness be present or not, it is for ever evident that a light is self-manifest. That which cannot be manifested by another, but which itself makes manifest all things, is called self-manifest. The Ṣhâstra says: "There is no need to sweeten by means of something else a thing which is sweet by nature, and which imparts sweetness to things which are not sweet, nor is there anything which can impart sweetness to that which is naturally sweet. We sweeten things like milk, cream, and curd with gur,[4] sugar-candy, honey, and the like. But there is no need to sweeten honey in a

[1] Mother of Râma. [2] Mother of Kṛishṇa.

[3] That is sound in the subtle state and which exists in gross form as speech (Vaikhari) is uncreated. [4] Molasses.

similar way; nor is there anything in the world which can sweeten honey. We reveal the courtyard and interior of a house, and all things in it by a light. But to reveal that light another is not required. The light reveals itself, and is therefore called self-manifest. Light alone of all things in the world possesses the power to reveal. Light is itself luminous; what else, then, can reveal it? Like honey and light, the Veda also is self-manifest. The Veda reveals the principles of all things in the Brahmâṇḍa, but is itself its own revealer. Who can reveal that which reveals all? It is not possible to have something which is beyond everything. Even if for fear that there may be darkness we do not admit the existence of light, yet light, revealing itself, makes visible and thus destroys darkness. Similarly, if for fear of any imperfection we do not admit that the Ṣhâstra is self-manifest, yet the Ṣhâstra, revealing itself, makes plain and thus removes the imperfection. That imperfection is this: Âryyan philosophers have said: "What is free from mistake, error, and deceit, that is authoritative."[1] Ṣhâstras are authoritative sayings—that is, the sayings of Ṣhâstra are free from mistake, error, and deceit. When we hear it said that man is the author of Dharma Ṣhâstra, it seems to us as if light and darkness were holding a consultation. It is evident that while man is erring, Ṣhâstra is unerring. Ṣhâstra never makes a mistake. Man is always doing so. Ṣhâstra is the eternal seat of mercy. Man the source of deceit. Ṣhâstra has no beginning or end, Man is ever subject to birth and death. Man is the slave of his senses. Ṣhâstra guides to the supersensual. Ṣhâstra is the unselfish Guru of the world. Man is a very worm of selfishness. It is a baseless fancy to try to bring about an agreement between these mutually conflicting conditions.

Many, made restless by the inconstant waves of glittering physical science, are wont to say that Ṣhâstra is nothing

[1] Âpta. [2] Spiritual teacher (see Introduction)

but the outcome and evidence of extensive experience. Someone, it is supposed, has said, or written down, as much as he has seen. From this it follows that whether the principles contained in Ṣhâstra be true or not, great credit must be given to him who spoke it. We, too, are not niggardly in giving such credit, but we find it very difficult to give credit to another whilst going to perdition oneself. You yourself are blind, and will, by leading me along some thorny path which you have discovered, drown me in a dark well. It is the height of folly to expect that in this state of things I shall speak of your extensive experience. I admit that you have seen and heard much more than I have. But who says that all which you have seen and heard are unerring, incontrovertible, and eternally pure? May be one day, in going to a river, its water seemed to you very pure and very cool. But who told you that, if relying on your word, I go into the river to bathe, I shall not be caught by a crocodile? What is the evidence that, even if the water be pure, there is no fear of danger? My going into the water may be the result of your extensive experience, but who will be responsible for my life? Secondly, this extensive experience appears to be to a large extent worthless. In the first place, it is the experience of a blind man. Next, it is difficult to ascertain the length of the period of which experience has been had. Of all the experience which man has acquired during the four ages—namely, Satya, Tretâ, Dvâpara, and Kali—we know only Âryyâvarta,[1] Bhâratavarsha,[2] or at the most, Jambudvîpa,[3] and perhaps the salt sea beyond. This is the furthest limit of experience. Now I ask, Who is it that has made mention in the Ṣhâstra of seven seas—to wit, the seas of salt, sugar-cane juice, wine, clarified butter, curd, milk, and sweet water? You will say that whoever may have done so has made

1 Country of the Âryyas.
2 India, as described in chap. iii of the Vishṇu Purâṇa.
3 The continent of that name (see *ibid.*, chap. ii.).

a mistake. It matters not. But whence came the names of the seven seas? You and I have not crossed the uncrossable sea, and reached the region of those seas. Whence could this country have got the names of the seven seas lying one after the other beyond the salt sea, which it is so difficult to traverse, and upon view only of the farthest quarter of which expert foreign navigators retrace their steps? You may say: "I do not believe in your salt sea"; but you know by what language you will be addressed should such ingratitude on your part to that which supports your body with its salt become known. Lay aside your far-fetched interpretation, your philosophical reasoning, your scientific argumentativeness. I do not want to hear of them where a matter of direct vision is concerned. I will not admit the validity of any other evidence. I will not bow my head before anything except the Ṣhâstra. May I be reminded of the lives of Samarasingha, Pratâpasingha, and Sivaji,[1] before I turn my thought to the words of those who, though possessed of the sense of sight, proceed to disprove the existence of things seen, and of truths established by Ṣhâstra, and to give far-fetched interpretation of them. Alas! the lion-hearted heroes, pillars of Sanâtana dharma! where are you to-day in this dismal time? That resplendent lustre of yours hallowed by Sâdhana, is mingled with the Mantra Ṣhâstra itself. Do ye to-day shed that lustre in every letter in every accent. Let the Ṣhâstra of Bhârata be again resplendent with the fire of the austerities[2] of Bhârata's sons.

Next, the earth is composed of seven islands, each of which is divided into nine continents.[3] The nature of the surface of each continent, its extent, heights, and depths, its inhabitants, their religion, practices, and longevity, the various Devatâs who exercise particular power in each particular place, the different Devatâs

[1] Rajput and Mahratta heroes.
[2] Tapas (see Introduction).
[3] Varsha.

who are worshipped in different places, and lastly, the special accounts given of the seven Svargas[1] and seven Pâtâlas,[2] and so forth : these are all matters which I have not at all mentioned. Say, are all these things dreams or illusion,[3] or mere imagination? It matters not if you explain them away as mere imagination, but save your own head. If you call it all imagination, then, as the salt sea is imagination, as Bhâratavarsha is imagination, so you and I too are imagination. We would advise you, instead of calling so many things imagination, to consider yourself alone as imaginary, in which case all trouble will be at an end. Not to speak of you and I, who are but the meanest of insects, even those whose acute and overpowering intellect penetrated into Brahmaloka[4] have, when dealing themselves with things which are beyond the senses, trampled on all kinds of evidence, and loudly declared to the world "Ṣhâstrayonitvât."[5] In that deeply dark place where all kinds of evidence fail, Ṣhâstra alone is the glowing light. We know not how powerful must be the evil Karma[6] acquired from birth to birth of him who suspects or believes the Ṣhâstra to be of human authorship. It is said,[7] "Thieve not, lie not, believe in and love the Creator, and you will attain eternal peace." A Dharma Ṣhâstra, the foundations of which are based on a few such settled maxims as these may be the fruit of extensive experience. To be induced by such a form of faith to doubt or disbelieve the Sanâtana Dharma and Sanâtana Ṣhâstra,[8] visible manifestation of Brahman himself, is the greatest degradation possible. It may be that in the case of that Ṣhâstra which has as its main object the maintenance

[1] Upper worlds. [2] Under worlds. [3] Mâyâ or Moha.

[4] The highest of the seven upper worlds.

[5] "On account of its having Ṣhâstra as its source," the third aphorism of the First Part, chap. i., in the Vedânta Sutra.

[6] Prârabdha, or that Karma which has begun and is already bearing fruit (see Introduction, "Karma").

[7] By "reformed" Hinduism.

[8] The eternal and immutable scripture and code of duty of the Hindus.

without conflict of a balance between the four actions of eating, sleeping, fearing, and sexual intercourse, its responsibility may cease with the provision of a few such maxims as "Thieve not, lie not, etc." It is, however, the greatest impudence for us to discuss the truth or otherwise of that Ṣhâstra the object of which is to declare the principles relating to the molecules and atoms of the endless crores of Brahmâṇḍas, each consisting of fourteen worlds. These principles we shall state, so far as it lies in our power, in our discourse on worship.[1] Man is imperfect, and whatever he does is imperfect. The imperfect can never attain the goal, and that which has not reached the goal is ignorant of the full truth about the Brahman. Who dare proceed along an unseen path in reliance upon the word of such an ignorant guide? Instead of relying upon their own words, Devas and Ṛishis have therefore admitted the evidence of Ṣhâstra, composed of authoritative sayings, to be alone the sole authority.

Responsibility for the education of children always rests with the parents. How can a senseless child be saved unless warned by parents, who point out to it which is the path of life, and which is the path of death? It is under this responsibility that, after the declaration of the truth, Bhagavân Himself has, descending on earth in the form of Ṣhâstra, said: "Both Turîya[2] and Shabda Brahman[3] are my eternal bodies." Though in-

[1] Pûjâ.

[2] The fourth state of consciousness above dreamless slumber (sushupti), the sleep of dreams (svapna), and the awakening (Jâgrat). According to the Upanishads, there are the three last states; three functions—viz., creation, preservation, destruction; and the three individual Jîva (Viṣhva, Taijasa, Prajnâ), the collective Jiva (Vaishvânara, Hîraṇyagarbha, Sutrâtmân), and the Paramâtmân. The fourth state above these is the Turîya. Shaiva doctrine speaks of a nameless fifth beyond Turîya, and two functions, viz., Turodhana, the function of Îṣhvara, and Anugraha, the function of Sadâṣiva.

[3] The manifested Brahman with attributes—the sound or word as distinguished from the attributeless, unmanifested absolute—the Parabrahman.

visible to human eyes, the Supreme Creatrix,[1] taking the world which She maintains upon Her lap has, as it were, with the finger, pointed out, and declared: "Do not, through misunderstanding, fall away from truth, and Dharma, and the Veda. Do not stray from the path of right practice."[2] Following upon the echo of that solemn sound, millions of sacrificial pits[3] have been lighted on mountains, riverbanks, in fields, forests, hermitages, temples, sacrificial chambers of monarchs, and house-holders, and in the abodes of celibate ascetics. The very tops of the palaces in Heaven[4] have been reddened with the light of the sacrificial fires on earth. None can say how many millions of Âryyan great men[5] have done sacrifices in religious observances[6] extending over twelve, a hundred, and a thousand years, and have with bodies cleansed of sin by their austerities,[7] entered through its open portals the Brahmaloka.[8]

Introduction of Tantra.

The curtain of the drama of time gradually and inexorably continued falling. Slowly evil days of unrighteousness,[9] murky with Mâyâ, continued to cast a gloom of impure practices[10] over the world of Dharma. Unknowingly, men steeped in that darkness began to enter wrong paths. Disease, sorrow, grief, and anguish sorely oppressed the life of the world.

A diseased child brings death on itself by eating, under the influence of delirium, unwholesome food. Although the child does not understand, the mother, who foresees the consequences, does. The thought of the child's inevitable harm naturally pains the heart of the mother,

1 Parameṣhvarî—the Devî. 2 Âchâra.
3 The Kuṇḍa, in which the sacrificial fire is lighted.
4 Svarga. 5 Mahâpurusha.
6 Vrata (see Introduction). 7 Tapas (*ibid.*).
8 The highest, or the three highest, of the fourteen worlds.
9 Adharma. 10 Anâchâra.

who is goodness incarnate. In accordance with this natural law, the loving heart of the good All-Mother Creatrix of the three worlds was moved, and the Mother, deluded by Her own play with a grieving heart, questioned Vaidyanâtha,[1] saying: "Deva of Devas, how shall the Jîva be saved?"

In the Kulârṇava Tantra we read:

"Devî said: 'Bhagavân, Thou art the Deva of even Devas, Thou art Îṣhvara, the ordainer of the five duties, omniscient, easily approached by devotion, and merciful to thy supplicants. Though Parameṣhvara, Thou art the Îṣhvara[2] of Kulasâdhakas, and the only source of the nectar of mercy. Deva, in this worthless dark Sangsâra, all Jîvas are oppressed with the gloom of sorrow. The countless multitude of Jîvas inhabiting all kinds of bodies constantly suffer the pains of both birth and death. There is no end of all this. None is happy, but all are oppressed with a deep sorrow. O Chief of Devas and Lord, tell me how these may be delivered from the bonds of existence.'"

Here the Mother has given full expression to the purpose for which She has willingly become the Mother of the world. The heart of the Mother of the world was the first to weep at the sight of its miseries. Though Herself ever changeless, Her heart throbbed with the agitation caused by the immense rolling waves of emotion into which Her eternal mercy was now thrown. Mother, this Brahmâṇḍa is Thy image and reflection. Thou seest Thine own face in the mirror of Mâyâ, and art intoxicated with Thine own love. The day upon which, at sight of the misery of the world, Thy mercy shadowed with gloom that ever-joyful countenance of Thine, on that same day the countenances of Thy children were shadowed with the thought of the pain which comes of

[1] Ṣhiva, as chief physician of all human ills.

[2] That is, though He is the supreme Lord and Guide of all, He is in a special sense the Lord and Guide of worshippers according to Kulâchâra.

separation from Thy love. From that day the world which had been separated from its Mother knew the love of the Mother's heart. From that day Thy children in the universe have learnt to call Thee by various names: Durgâ, when they have fallen amidst the insurmountable difficulties of the world; Târâ, when they behold the huge waves of the ocean of existence so difficult to traverse; and Kâlî, when crushed by the torment of a terrible fate. Glory to the stream of mercy in the merciful Mother. Glory to the wave of pity in Her who is full of pity. Glory to the Mother's endless love. From that day the never-ceasing currents of Thy love flow through all the veins, the marrow of the bones, and the heart of Jîva. And so to-day, O Mother, should even a vile, hellish sinner like myself forget in his danger all else, he cannot forget Thy name. Whenever the fearful form of danger appears, Someone opens, as it were, the door of the heart, and at that instant the courtyard of the universe resounds with the cry: "Victory, Victory, Victory to Târâ!" I know not whether others hear the sound; but, Mother, since Thy own substance is the sounds Nâda and Vindu,[1] what sound, then, wilt Thou hear? Whether Thou hear it or not, I hear, O Mother, that as I sound "Victory to Târâ," another instantly raises as an echo: "Fear not, have no fear." Who is that Other, O Mother? Glory to Thy eternal play. O Mother! Thou knowest and Father knows.

When the pain of disease becomes unbearable, I am instantly healed by saying: "O Mother!" But the disease is again made worse by the taking of a bad diet. The heart is again attacked by doubts, misgivings, and reasonings. Nowadays our ears are constantly tor-

[1] From the Sakala Parameṣhvara came Ṣhakti; from Ṣhakti came Nâda, and from Nâda issued Vindu. The Devī Parameṣhvarî is container of them all (see Saradâtilaka, chap. i.).

mented by the ravings of that Sânnipâtika delirium. Wherever we go we hear: "Why is there the Tantra when there is the Veda?" The patient does not understand that the delirium has got worse, and that his end is near. Upon this the chief of Physicians[1] is at a loss to discover what He should do. He then searches His entire store of remedies, and prescribes rasâyana.[2] At other times it is poison, but for delirium it is the elixir of life.[3] In a healthy body poison is the messenger of death, but in delirium it acts as a great mantra, renewing life. This is the reason why, O Sâdhaka, a Sâdhana of acute, powerful, and burning mantras, is prescribed for us in the Tantra. It is when all other medicines, all other Sâdhanas, have failed that the necessity arises for the Tantra Ṣhâstra, because in the store-house of Ṣhâstras there is no other Sâdhana than that prescribed in the Tantra. Ṣhâstra has therefore said: "When the south wind blows strongly from the Malaya mountains, there is no longer need to wave the palmleaf fan." By Sâdhana we nowadays understand something which has to be done upon one day in our life, like vaccination against smallpox.[4] Formerly we took the Bengal form of vaccination.[5] What does it matter that we now take the English form?[6] Formerly we did both Sâdhana and Bhajana,[7] according to the Veda, Purâṇa, and Tantra. What harm (you say) will follow if we now do them according to the Bible or even the Koran? No other harm is done than this, that life is itself harmed. It may be enough for those to whom religion and duty are mere forced labour.[8] But in the case of those who wish to see Dharma as a thing directly visible, and who wish

[1] Vaidyanâtha or Ṣhiva.

[2] A class of medicine in the Ayurvedic system.

[3] Literally, Amṛita, or nectar.

[4] The true nature of Sâdhana is long and persistent effort and self-training until success (Siddhi) is achieved.

[5] Vaccination direct with small-pox virus.

[6] Vaccination with serum.

[7] Worship.

[8] Begâr, done by compulsion and without reward.

by its minute vision to realize all supersensual things, their resolve extends to death, their purpose to fruition,[1] their path to the Brahmaloka, and their destination is the Brahman Itself. O Jîvas of this earth! Conceive to what highest of abodes they, after penetrating through this caldron-shaped Brahmânda, must ascend, whose final aim is the lotus feet of the Mother of the world,[2] kissed by the head of Him who bears the crescent moon.[3]

This great Siddhi is the Jîva's perfect wealth to be gained by Sâdhana, without which none can come by it; sought for as it is even by Him who is worshipped by all creatures. Sâdhana is the name of that which ends in Siddhi. If I want that Siddhi I must do Sâdhana, which is the work of a Sâdhu.[4] So that if I have to do Sâdhana, I must become a Sâdhu, or if I do Sâdhana, I shall, as a matter of course, become a Sâdhu.

That Sâdhana is of three kinds: physical, verbal, mental. Siddhi and Sâdhana I must accomplish with my body, senses, and mind according to circumstances, country, time, and person. Now it must be remembered that all my best wealth consists only of what I shall be able to acquire under the following conditions: It must be acquired in this country, crowded by Varṇasangkaras,[5] Mlechchhas, Yavanas,[6] and persons who adhere to other religious beliefs; in the Kali age, with its bad practices, filthy habits, oppression, license, and prostitution; with an impure body where lust, anger, greed, pride, delusion, and envy[7] contend as upon a battlefield; with restless senses, a doubting heart, and in a life which will last at the most a hundred years. All my commerce in the market of this world is with this capital only, and in its use I must both

[1] Siddhi.
[2] Jagadambâ.
[3] Ṣhiva called Chandraṣhekhara.
[4] Pious person.
[5] People born of parents of different castes.
[6] Defiled persons and foreigners of different kinds.
[7] The six sins—Kâma, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, Mâtsaryya.

guard the capital and see to the profits. Now tell me who will perform religious ceremonies[1] and sacrifices[2] lasting twelve, a hundred, or a thousand years? Where shall I get the Vaidik Hotars, Ṛitviks, Adhvaryus, and Âchâryyas,[3] versed in mantra for such a sacrifice? Of the thousands of Ṣhakhâs[4] of the Veda, but a few now remain as memorials; the rest are lost. Which mantra of which of these Ṣhakhâs will to-day draw down which Deva to the seat of sacrifice? From whence will the needed lakhs of heaps of Samidh[5] be to-day daily procured? Will it ever again happen in that Bhâratavarsha,[6] in the capital of which a thousand cows are now daily slaughtered, that the milk and ghee of milch cows will flow in streams like rivers? Will the glowing fire be ever again gratified by the offering purified by mantra of mountainous heaps of the holy flesh of animals sacrificed? Will Bhagavân Vaiṣhvânara,[7] with bearded face and matted hair effulgent with Brahmik light, ever again rise from the sacrificial pit and, bursting through columns of fire playing in fearful tongues of flame, stand before the giver of the sacrifice,[8] and say: "Choose thy blessing?" Will the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha[9] ever again leave Vaikuṇṭha[10] at the prayer of Ṛishis oppressed by Râkshasas and Asuras[11] and descend to earth to guard the sacrifice from the harm which they fear? Will a master of truth[12] like Ṣhukadeva,[13] or a great Ṣhakti like Draupadî,[14] be ever again born of the sacrificial fire? Will Takshaka, King of Nâgas,[15] trembling with fear because of a sacrifice, ever again have to seek the pro-

[1] Vrata (see Introduction). [2] Yajna (see Introduction).

[3] Various classes of Vedic priests.

[4] Branches or schools of Veda; the traditional text followed by a particular school.

[5] Wood used for the homa sacrifice. [6] India.

[7] Agni, Lord of Fire, or the Bhagavân Himself in His aspect of fire.

[8] Yajamâna. [9] Vishṇu. [10] The heaven of Vishṇu.

[11] Demonic beings. [12] Tattvajna. [13] Son of Vyâsa.

[14] Wife of the five Pâṇḍus.

[15] Serpent divinities of the nether world.

tection of Indra? Will the Deva of a thousand eyes[1] ever again be about to fall with Takshaka into a sacrificial pit, whirled down through space by the power of Brâhmaṇas and the wondrous potency of Mantras? India has to-day lost her old strength and the vigour of her austerities.[2] Gone is that old faith, strength, and fortitude; gone is that courage. In what an unlucky moment was the fatal snake sacrifice[3] commenced! Then worshipped Fire became displeased with India, because of the deprivation of his worship. Then the mantra power of the Brâhmaṇa became offended at being prevented from consuming the King of the Devas[4] with Takshaka. That displeasure and that offence has been operating ever since. The old day has never returned. The curtain of the sacrificial world has finally dropped. It has not been raised again. How contaminating must be the effect of the Kali age, that, despite the presence in their full strength of Devatâs, Mantras, Brâhmaṇas, and the materials for sacrifice, the latter was never completed. Who can unravel the mystery of the play of Yajneṣhvarî?[5]

For this reason I was saying: "O Jîva, born in the Kali age, how dare either you or I proceed there where Mahârâjas Parîkshit, and Janamejaya failed?" And even if we were to advance, would that make everyone happy? Yajna[6] is the Sâdhana of those only who desire enjoyment, wealth, and heaven.[7] Are those who, being supplicants for the ambrosial feet of the spouse[8] of Ṣhangkara,[9] set no value upon the abode of the Suras,[10] Indra, or Brahmâ[11]—are they to be tempted by Yajna? What is to be done for such as these? With what Sâdhana will you gratify them? You will say by purity

[1] Indra.
[2] Tapas.
[3] Sarpasatra, performed by King Janamejaya for the purpose of destroying all snakes, a snake having killed his father, Parikshit.
[4] Indra.
[5] The Devî as Lord of sacrifice (Yajna).
[6] Sacrifice (see Introduction).
[7] Svarga.
[8] That is, of the Goddess, or Devî.
[9] Ṣhiva, her husband
[10] Devas.
[11] Lord of the Celestials and the creative Brahmā.

of mind and body,[1] living in the Guru's house, listening,[2] thinking,[3] constant meditation,[4] contemplation,[5] concentration[6] and ecstasy.[7] These means exist in the Vaidik path for the acquisition of the truth. True; they exist as jewels exist in the sea. But what is that to you or me? Who can be such a sacrificing monarch as Râvaṇa that Varuṇadeva[8] should collect the jewels and present them to him? Who is such an Emperor in the domain of austerity like Vaṣhishṭha, Vishvâmitra, Jâvâli, Janaka, or Jaimini, that Bhagavân will churn the ocean of the Veda, and place all the jewels of the knowledge of truth in his hand? Who can acquire a heavenly[9] body with the effulgence of Brahman,[10] like that of Nachiketa, so as to enable him to go to the house of Yama,[11] and there from Yama himself receive instructions in the knowledge of the Brahman? No more is to be found that Âryyan life in which every event from the conception in the womb to the cremation of the body was accompanied by Vaidik mantra. It is no exaggeration to say that a heavenly body, the passions of which have been controlled, and which is thus made a suitable vehicle for the development of the knowledge of Brahman according to Vaidik rules, is nowadays impossible of achievement. Need it be said that no longer does anyone lie with lawful wife but once only after her monthly period[12] kindling the sacrificial fire[13] with a heart set

[1] Brahmacharyya. [2] Ṣhravaṇa. [3] Manana.
[4] Nididhyâsana. [5] Dhyâna (see Introduction).
[6] Dhâranâ (see *ibid.*). [7] Samâdhi (see *ibid.*).
[8] Lord of the waters. [9] Divya.
[10] Brahmatejas. [11] Lord of death.

[12] According to the ancient Vaidik rule, sexual union must take place once a month, from the fourth or fifth to the fifteenth day after the menses (the conceptual period), and then only, without breach of that continence which governs the married state. The follower of this Vaidik rule is described as Pashu in the Nitya Tantra (Ṛitukâlang vinâdeviramanang paribarjayet).

[13] The union of man and wife is a veritable sacrificial rite, a homa, wherein she is both hearth (Kunda) and flame. See the great thirteenth Mantra of the Homaprakarana in the Bṛihadâraṇyaka Upanishad.

steadily on the Parabrahman.[1] in the desire to get a son who will himself be full of the divine spirit. The ancient Brâhmanik fire[2] has sunk to ashes through eating the bread of servitude to foreigners[3] for hundreds of generations. No longer are our blood and seed pure and vigorous with the strength of austerity[4] and mantra. No longer do parents observe continence.[5] And so I was saying, long past is that day when the summit of the edifice of the Vaidik Brahma-knowledge could be made to rest upon the foundations of an unswerving purity.[6] Men no longer meditate on the Parabrahman with closed eyes, restraining the senses of perception and action, merging the mind in Prakṛiti.[7] Amongst those who nowadays shut their eyes and make a pretence of such meditation you will discern a movement in their shuttings and blinkings even in the darkness. All this is but a show of self-restraint. Bhagavân, speaking even of those who have really controlled their senses, but who have not through habit been able to dispel the mass of impressions which these have made upon their minds, has said in the Gita: " The fool who, after controlling his senses of action, inwardly thinks of the objects of those senses, is called a hypocrite."

Is it not a vain presumption on our part to hope to be able to successfully travel along a path in which the discipline is so strict and the trial is of so searching a character? Ṣhrî Kṛishṇa, who was Bhagavân in person, failed to impress the truth on Arjuna, though he pointed it out to him, as it were, with a finger in the Yuga-

[1] The Supreme. Similarly the Tantra (Yogini, chap. vi.) says that union should be performed with a divine feeling and disposition (Maithunam prachareddhîmân devatâbhâvacheshtitam), accompanied by the mantras given in the Tantrasâra.

[2] Brahmatejah. [3] Yavanas. [4] Tapas.

[5] See note 12, p. 75. It is a mistake to suppose that brahmacharyya (continence) is limited to one of the âṣhramas only. It governs all, including the married state (see Yogiyajnavalkya, chap. i.).

[6] Brahmacharyya.

[7] The source whence the senses (indriyas), mind (manas), and all the phenomenal being, derives.

Sandhyâ,[1] at the close of the Dvâpara age and the commencement of the Kali age. He failed (Arjuna being a Kshatriya[2]), to make him hold fast in his heart the knowledge of the Truth[3] which is the possession of Brâhmaṇas. We are surely, therefore, not awake but dreaming if we hope to acquire knowledge of truth by reading the Yogavâṣhishṭha, Râmâyana, and the Gîtâ while sunk in the gloom and under the full sway of the Kali age. We, on the contrary, know that many a spiritually disposed man, who, under the influence of such a daydream, has attempted to become a Yogî along the Vaidik path, has ended in becoming neither a believer nor an unbeliever, but a queer being, half man, half lion. By constant meditation upon a misty nothing,[4] his mind and heart become such a vacuity that there is neither faith, reverence, devotion, nor love in them, but merely a bewilderment with the inward lament: "Alas, I am lost!" In many places we have found such persons coming secretly to ask: "What means are there left for us?" But their only difficulty is this: They want to know whether it is not possible for them to become Tântrik or Paurâṇik worshippers in secret, whilst keeping up the show of the possession of Brahma knowledge and without having publicly to wear the sacred crown lock,[5] or thread,[6] or to paint their bodies with the sacred marks.[7] Is it not deplorable that a man should be in this condition, repenting at last in this fashion at the close of his life, after having gone through all its useless troubles?

It was with the knowledge that man might have to

[1] That is, the period of transition from one Yuga to another, reckoned at a thousand years.

[2] Warrior caste.

[3] Tattva.

[4] Âkâṣha: literally, ether, space.

[5] The Ṣhikha, or long strand of hair worn at the back of the top of the head by orthodox Hindus from after the date of the Chûḍakaraṇa ceremony.

[6] Worn by the twice-born classes among the Hindus.

[7] Tilaka, or sectarian marks, and Nâma, or names of the Deities.

die such an unhallowed death even after the acquisition of the precious human body, which is, as it were, a thornless step to the door of Brahman, that She who dwells in the heart prescribed the remedy millions of years ago. But what can we do? As I have said, a diet which is daily bad aggravates the disease. The musical Sâdhaka[1] has therefore said:

"It is the fault of none, O Mother Ṣhyâmâ.
It is I myself who dig and thus sink in the water."

And is that death an easy one? The suffering of that repentance is more unbearable than even the torture of a hundred rods at the hands of Yama. The thought of the remembrance of such a horrible death melts the hardest heart, and flooding tears wet the livid visage of the dying man. Then, with unrestrainable force, a fountain of tears bursts forth from the innermost recesses of the heart.

"What shall I do, O Mother? Day by day the malady grows stronger. I am in grave danger through the disorder of Pitta as Sattva, Vâyu as Rajas, and Kapha[2] as Tamas. This time the delirium is that of Sânnipâta.[3] O Mother, it is my destruction,[4] and thus I weep incessantly!"

At the close of such a life, wanting in trust and full of lament, both inward and outward restraint[5] are impracticable. The ecstatic trance[6] is impossible. The dawning of the truth that all is Brahman[7] is a far-off thing. In consequence, a journey along that difficult path, with a body decrepit such as mine, is hardly to be thought of. To take to the Vaidik path and then, upon failure to acquire a knowledge of truth, to judge

[1] Râmaprasâda.

[2] Bile as sattva, the manifesting principle; wind as rajas, principle of activity; and phlegm as tamas, principle of inertia.

[3] A fever.

[4] Sânnipâta—a play on the word.

[5] Ṣhama and dama.

[6] Samâdhi

[7] Literally, the tattva of advaita Brahman.

the Veda to be ineffectual, is as though one were to judge a tree to be without fruit after we had touched its roots only, when the tree gives its fruit to him alone who can reach its topmost branches. There is more chance of getting the fruit some day or other without even touching the tree if one has but faith in the existence of the fruit, and takes up one's abode in its shade.

It may seem a mystery hard to unravel that the mere sitting down at the foot of a tree which gives its fruit only to him who can reach its topmost branch, without even touching its root and in dependence on faith alone, will yet one day or other surely secure the fruit, yet, in fact, it is not such an impossibility as it appears to be when first stated.

It often happens that parents walk about in the gardens attached to the houses of rich landholders, enjoying the evening breeze, holding by their hands their son and daughter. It may also happen that on such an occasion a tree is discovered in the garden to be laden with ripe fruit. The parents, desirous of seeing how the hearts of their children yearn for the fruit, speak to them, and pointing out the fruit, say: "See what nice fruit has ripened on the tree." Instantly turning their eyes to the fruit, the rich man's children, bred up in softness and indulgence, are unable to restrain themselves, and at once assail their parents with weeping and the cry: "Give, give, give!" Out of play the parents say: "Then climb up the tree and bring the fruit down." But the children know that they cannot do so, and the parents' fun only fires them with anger. They then throw themselves about on the ground weeping. The heart of the loving mother is melted, and she says to her husband: "Enough now, find out the means." Then father and mother take up the two children in their arms, and hold them up to the branches of the tree. Thus supported by their parents' arms, the boy and girl pluck the wished-for fruit with their own hands and

dance with joy. And thus we see that it is not impossible for the children of the rich, brought up with indulgence, to make unreasonable demands, and yet to have them satisfied.

Sâdhaka, tell me what King and what Queen you consider to be the greatest in the world? Who is a King before the King of Kings of three worlds? And who is a Queen before the Queen of the greatest Yogî?[1] She whose feet are worshipped by Upendra and Surendra?[2] You and I are children of such parents. Wherein are we of no account? Wherein do we lack tender, affectionate, and indulgent treatment? On the day upon which Jîva sheds bitter tears for the fruit of liberation borne by the Tree of Veda in the garden of the world, on that very day the Mother of the world, seeing that her weak children were unable to climb that tree, addressed the Deva of Devas,[3] and affectionately said: "No longer play: but quickly find some means." And what other means could there be than that which they gave? The Father and Mother of the world extended their two assuring arms of Âgama and Nigama,[4] and held up their sons and daughters, the men and women of the world. Supported by their parents' arms, they have plucked with their own hands the fruit of liberation precious even to Yogîs borne by the tree of Veda. Sâdhakas have thus, without having had to climb the tree of Veda, easily attained, by means of the mantras of the Tantra Ṣhâstra, Kaivalyasiddhi,[5] the fruit of Veda. We do not know whether so much

[1] That is, Ṣhiva, who, by His great austerities, is the Lord and exemplar of all ascetics.

[2] Names of Vishṇu and Indra. Vishṇu was younger brother of Indra.

[3] Ṣhiva.

[4] The Âgama is here the Tantra when in the form in which the Devî is questioner and Ṣhiva the teacher; and Nigama when the Devî assumes the latter rôle to instruct Her spouse.

[5] Final liberation (Moksha); Bhojarâja, commenting on the Yoga Sutra (iv. 33), explains Kaivalya to be that state of energy in which modification is extinct, and it remains alone in its own nature.

kindness is shown at all times. But it must at least be shown at the time of enjoyment of the evening breeze.[1]

The sun is setting, and a deep, dark, fearful night approaches. At such time can the Mother leave Her children alone in the dense and gloomy forest? Satya, Tretâ, and Dvâpara ages, the three praharas[2] of the Mother's day, are passed, and the last prahara of the Kali age is about to pass. The sun of the life of Jîva in the Kali age cannot long remain above the horizon, and so he too is going to set. A dense, dark, deadly night is coming. Is it to be thought that the Mother who gladdens the heart of Mahâkâla[3] and dispels all fear arising from existence will leave Her children alone in such a terribly perilous evening? When She enters her Chintâmaṇi house[4] surrounded by pârijâta,[5] flowers in the island of gems,[6] Her sons and daughters also, whose only support is the skirt of their mother's dress, will, with quick steps, follow their Mother into the eternal region. Our Mother is Râjrâjeṣhvarî[7] and all-merciful, and thus we are so spoilt, proud, and prone to take offence. We cannot give up the habit of readily taking offence,[8] which we have acquired from our companionship with our mother. This habit is essential to the relationship between Mother and child, and so, as long as life exists, we cannot give it up. This habit is a part and parcel of our life, and at death we will make a present of it to Her feet. Reciting

[1] That is, at the close of the last of the ages.

[2] A prahara is three hours, day and night thus being of eight praharas duration.

[3] Ṣhiva.

[4] Chintâmaṇi is the jewel which yields all desires. Of this the house or city is built. Brahmanda Pr.: In the Gauṛapâda Sutra, 7, the house is explained as the place of origin of all those mantras which bestow all desired objects (chintita).

[5] A heavenly tree in the paradise of Indra.

[6] Maṇidvîpa, in the ocean of nectar, called by the Rudrayâmala "the lamp of the world."

[7] Queen of Queens.

[8] The meaning is that a child takes more offence at that which is done by the mother he loves than at that which is done by a stranger, to whom he is indifferent.

the life-renewing mantra, "We are of the Mother and the Mother is ours," we shall bid farewell to the Sangsâra. This, by the Mother's grace, is the standard of perpetual victory here and hereafter for the Sâdhaka, the Mother's child. The Sâdhaka knows that this play, consisting of mantras of Her whose embodiment is yantra[1] and Tantra, is very beautiful, sweet, and charming to the mind and heart.

Monism.[2]

Vedânta and Shangkarâchâryya.

Here and there we find a number of monists[3] who firmly believe that the knowledge of Tattva or non-dualistic Siddhi, as promulgated by the adored great man Ṣhangkarâchâryya, cannot be attained in any other way than that laid down by him, and that none but he can teach the principles of monism. Had these people been themselves proficient in such principles, we might have found ground to believe what they said.

But we regret that their statement is the only evidence of their knowledge. We are unable ourselves to make out by what evidence they have arrived at the conclusion that non-dualistic Siddhi[4] is not attainable by any other means than that prescribed by the Vedânta. It may be that they believe that there was never born another as proficient in its principles as Ṣhangkarâchâryya, who was an incarnation of Ṣhangkara[5] Himself. We, too, admit this with bowed heads. But what is the proof that the attainment of monistic truth is impossible except through the Vedântik philosophy, as taught by him? You and I cannot be men like Ṣhangkarâchâryya. But cannot he be like Him whose incarnation he is said to be, and for which he is honoured and worshipped? Is that truth unknown to Ṣhiva which was promulgated by His

1 Tântrik diagrams, used in worship (see Introduction).
2 Advaita.
3 Advaitists.
4 That is, the realization of the unity of all things.
5 Ṣhiva.

incarnation? How can we believe that a spark can burn the whole world, and that yet there is no heat in fire? As a matter of fact, the principle of monism, which was taught by the Vedânta philosophy, has been brought into harmony with the principle of dualism in the Tantra Ṣhâstra. It is hard to say how many hundreds of Yogîs and Ṛishis, Sâdhus and Sâdhakas, have been slain or wounded in the fights over dualism and monism. Bhagavân, the Creator of all things, has in the Tantra Ṣhâstra brought that fight to a close by harmonizing prakṛiti and vikṛiti.[1] But those who are by nature inclined to fighting ever consider peace to be a trouble, and this is why even to-day there are to be found many dualists in the community of the learned who are hostile to Tantra. But the idea of a quarrel between Jîva and Ṣhiva at one and the same time shames us and makes one laugh.

Looking at the matter with the eye of a philosopher, it seems as if monism and dualism are as much asunder as the eastern and western seas. On the one side monism says that the Sangsâra is a mirage, a wave of Mâyâ, an effect of illusion, just as the mistaking of a rope for a serpent or of the nacre of an oyster shell for silver. Brahman, who is knowledge, eternal, pure, and without attribute, is beyond ignorance, attributes, and the sangsâra. He has no desire, activity, endeavour, nor is subject to Karma. In short, only He exists, and nothing else. On the other hand, dualism says that He has desire, activity, endeavour, care, and is subject to Karma.[2] In short,

[1] Vikṛiti is, literally, "change," as of form—here effect. The meaning is that the Tantra harmonizes the origin of things with its effects—God and His world.

[2] All manifestations of Deity are subject to both time and Karma. Thus it is said, Namastat karmabhyo vidhirapi na yebhyah prabhavati (Salutation to Karma, over which even the Creator Brahmâ cannot prevail), and,

Ye samastâ jagatsṛishtisthitisangharakâriṇâh
Te pi kâleshu lîyante kâlohi balavattarah

(The Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer, in time become extinct; because time is the stronger).

all things which are said to exist, exist in Him. There is nothing which does not exist in Him. Both are Ṣhâstras. The one is not, in authority, either superior or inferior to the other. Which will give way to which? Both have Bhagavân for their witness and Judge. The settlement of this dispute is impossible by mere men. Therefore, to dispel the doubts of the three worlds, She who dwells in all hearts Herself assumed the rôle of questioner, and He who dwells in all hearts and is the beloved consort of the all-good Devî answered Her questions, and Nârâyaṇa[1] Himself accepted the answer as the truth[2]—*Agata*, or issued from the mouth of Ṣhiva; *Gata*, or entered into the mouth of the Daughter of the Mountain;[3] and *Abhimata*, or approved of by Vâsudeva.[4]

For these three reasons, and taking the initial letters of the three words, the Tantra Ṣhástra is called Âgama.[5] Where Pârvatî is the questioner and Maheṣhvara answers, there the Ṣhâstra is called Âgama. Where, to heighten the sweetness of the play, Mahâdeva is the questioner and Maheṣhvarî answers, there it is called Nigama. The Tantra Ṣhâstra is called Nigama by taking the initial letters of the three words *ni*rgata, *ga*ta, and *ma*ta, in the verse in which it is said—*Nirgata*, or issued out of the mouth of the Daughter of the Mountain; *Gata*, or entered into the mouths of the five-mouthed Deva;[6] and *Sammata*, or acquiesced in by Vâsudeva.[7] The Tantra Ṣhâstra is

1 Vishṇu.
2 Tattva.
3 Girijâ, or the Devî as Pârvatî.
4 Vishṇu.
5 The author here refers to the definition of Âgama—

" *A*gatang shambhuvaktrevyah
*Ga*tancha girijâmukhe
*Ma*tancha vasudevena
Tasmât âgama uchyate.

6 Ṣhiva.
7 The definition as ordinarily given is:

" *Ni*rgato girijâvaktrât
*Ga*tascha girîṣha ṣhrutim
*Ma*tascha vâsudevasya
Nigama parikathyate.

divided into these two parts of Âgama and Nigama. Just as, however, there is in reality no difference between Bhagavân and Bhagavatî, the male and female speakers of Tantra, so there is none between Âgama and Nigama revealed by them. The sole purpose of both is to give liberation to the Jîva by a method through which monistic truth is reached through the world of duality.

Despite the essential truth of the monistic principle, its comprehension by all is an impossibility in this dualistic phenomenal Sangsâra. For this reason it has not been generally accepted as the path to be followed, though it has been preached even to the farthest quarters of the earth by Ṣhangkarâchâryya himself, and successive generations of thousands of disciples who have followed him. Amongst those who have travelled along the monistic path, scarcely one in a thousand has succeeded in reaching his destination safely, without trouble. When we speak of the non-dualistic path shown by Ṣhangkarâchâryya, many may think that that which is devoid of Tântrik practice and is advocated solely by the Vedânta is that path. But we mean nothing of the kind, nor is it our purpose here to say anything as to whether that path is or is not accompanied by Tântrik practice. This much only we now say—namely, that the monistic path advocated by Ṣhangkarâchâryya is one which is characterized by the force of an intense Vairâgya,[1] as is shown by the command : " Hastily get out of your home." It is doubtful whether one man in a hundred thousand has ever been able to attain Siddhi[2] along this path. We do not know whether there are at the present time any true monists, but whether there are any or not, there are still many who in the name of Ṣhangkarâchâryya pretend to be such in the Daṇḍî's matha,[3] the Brahmachârî's

[1] Dispassion or indifference to the things of the world ; other-worldliness.

[2] Success ; that is, here, the liberation which is the end of all spiritual striving ; or success in the preliminary stages leading to it.

[3] Monastic establishment of Daṇḍîs, a sect of Sanyâsîs.

âṣhrama,[1] and the Mohanta's âkharhâ.[2] It is not yet time to speak of these. There are men in the successive generations of Ṣhangkarâchâryya's disciples who have earned, in the opinion of philosophers, a world-wide reputation as monistic Vedântists, and are still worshipped as Gurus, owing to the uncommon power of argument which they displayed in demolishing the views of Nyâya philosophers,[3] atheists, and others. How much Siddhi such men (despite their being Gurus of the philosophic world) really attained, Sâdhakas can only guess from the fact that they disproved other's views and established their own. It passes our understanding how he who has knowledge of nothing beyond Brahman can yet resolutely engage in militant discussion with Nyâya philosophers. A power of astute argument in philosophy, and monistic Siddhi attained by Sâdhana, are not one and the same thing.[4] Non-dualistic Siddhi is a far cry for him who has still the principle of argument in him. Who will deny that a discussion with philosophers creates an amount of distracting dualistic propensities a thousand times greater than that created by contact with wife and children? However that be, while we are bound to make our reverence to these philosophical Daṇḍîs on the ground of their power of discussion, we are disinclined to give them even a nod on the ground that they should be considered as having attained monistic Siddhi. Such being the case of the Gurus, it is needless to say what sort of Siddhi is attained by their disciples.

The power upon attainment of Siddhi in Vairâgya Sâdhana[5] to make the knowledge of the Truth[6] one's pursuit is a very rare thing in this Sangsâra.

It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say that the achieve-

[1] Abode of celibate ascetic.
[2] Monastic establishment, presided over by its chief or Mohant.
[3] One of the six systems of Hindu philosophy.
[4] One is talk about, and the other is realization of, the Brahman.
[5] That is, upon having attained to the state of dispassion.
[6] Tattva.

ment of the comprehension of monistic truth in face of the antagonism of a dualistic world is an impossibility. Non-dualists travelling the path of the Vedânta know that a person, in order to acquire a knowledge of truth, must first appear before a Guru devoted to Brahman and seek his help, and that it is only if the latter kindly gives him instructions that he can acquire non-dualistic knowledge. Where, however, according to monism, all are Brahman, the relation of teacher and student becomes an impossibility. "Non-duality is to be sought everywhere except with Guru." The relationship between Guru and disciple is a thing of dualism. Just as, in order to pursue the monistic path, I must first with submission travel along the path of dualism—since, without a Guru, the attainment of Siddhi is impossible—so the Tantra Ṣhâstra points out to us that if we entertain any hope of being able to travel along the monistic path we must first pass through, and must not attempt to leap over, the dualistic world. Great and mighty heroes have maimed themselves by taking such a jump.

I know that I have to climb to the top of a high precipice, but to throw my arms in the air and try to fly to it is not the act of an intelligent man. Those who, in the pride of the strength of their arms, have attempted to do so have invariably ended in being thrown to earth with broken bones and joints. At length, with grieving hearts, they, too, have said : "Know, O Sâdhu ! that it is more difficult to control the mind than to drink up all the water of the ocean, to uproot Mount Sumeru[1] or to eat fire, were such possible."

It was to save the Sâdhaka from this deplorable condition and from these lamentations that the Tantra Ṣhâstra was at length introduced. The Tantra Ṣhâstra does not, therefore, at the outset ignore this visible, palpable dualistic world. As, to ascend a precipice, one must advance slowly, stepping on the earth itself, so also, in

[1] See Introduction.

order to realize monistic truth, one must progress slowly through the dualistic world. You will only make monistic Siddhi more distant and difficult to achieve if it be believed that the dualistic world is inimical to Sâdhana.

The Tantra Ṣhâstra, instead of calling the dualistic view of things inimical to Sâdhana, embraced it as a friend. It took into its arms, as though they were its children, both dualism and monism. Tântrik Sâdhakas are filled with joy at the sight of the loving sports of both. He alone realizes the sweetness of the play of both who has plunged into the non-dualistic Truth after having churned the dualistic world. Though resting and rocking upon the waves of Sangsâra, he is not of it. Though living in and affected by the dangers and prosperities of the Sangsâra, he, like the petals of a wind-rocked lotus, is ever detached from its joys and sorrows. Full as his heart is of the perfect joy, sorrow never casts its gloomy shadows upon him. Because of this, Sadânanda,[1] elated with joy for his devotees, has said in the Tantra : " In the world some desire non-dualistic, others dualistic knowledge, but those who have known My truth have passed beyond both dualism and non-dualism."

Had those who would do away with the dualistic world as unreal been really able to do so, then no harm would have been done. But on many occasions we see that, whether they have or have not this power, they unquestionably do away with themselves. Why do you, who consider it to be nothing, dread the dualistic world, which you think to blow away with your breath ? Again, why take so much trouble to blow away that which is nothing ? On listening to the lamentations of non-dualists, one feels as if the dualistic Sangsâra had been created merely to frighten them. For them there is no peace, love, freedom from disease, or joy in the Sangsâra, but only the cry, " Alas, I am lost !" and the lamenting call to " Save, save !" It is as though, from dread of the dualistic world,

[1] Ṣhiva, the ever joyous.

monism had shrunk all its limbs, and was trying to find a place wherein to hide its head in the eternal Brahmâṇḍa. Where shall it go to save itself ? Wheresoever it goes, it finds a dualistic world. It is of the dualistic principle that the world-play of Brahmamayî is made. Who, living in the world, can understand monistic truth by ignoring the dualistic world ? What greater folly can there be than to expect that you and I can with a frown do away with the dualistic world, which even men like the royal Ṛishi Janaka, Ṣhukadeva[1] Ṣhangkarâchâryya,[2] and others could not ignore. Not to mention others, even Parameṣhvara Himself, the Guru of all moving and motionless things, at whose feet Suras[3] and Asuras[4] pay homage, made pretence to be deluded by Mâyâ, and sought protection at the feet of Her whose Mâyâ it was.

In the Târârahasya it is said :

" The Deva of Devas[5] in obeisance prostrated himself at the lotus feet of Jagadambâ,[6] and said : ' Devî, I have been through 120,000 books, and I am yet unable to say what is Kalâtattva.[7] O Sureṣhvarî,[8] do thou relate to me that Kalâyoga ![9] O Devî, lover of devotees, O Mother Kâlikâ, be pleased with me !' Hearing these words of Maheṣhvara,[10] the Saviour of the three worlds smiled and said : ' All men in the Brahmâṇḍa are Thy image,[11] and all women are My image. O Mahâdeva, practise this yoga day by day !' "

Let the Sâdhaka here particularly take note. Here Maheṣhvarî Herself is the teacher, and Maheṣhvara the pupil. Mahâdeva is Sâdhaka ; Mahâdevî answers his questions. The men and women of the world are the objects of Sâdhana. Though omniscient and Lord of all, Ṣhiva himself is bent on practising this yoga of know-

[1] The Ṛishi son of Vyâsa.
[2] The expounder of the Vedânta philosophy.
[3] Devas.
[4] Demonic spirits.
[5] Ṣhiva.
[6] The Devî as Mother of the world.
[7] Art of Sâdhana.
[8] Mistress of Suras (*ante*).
[9] Art of Yoga.
[10] Ṣhiva.
[11] Svarûpa.

ledge,[1] and She who dwells in all hearts warns to-day even a disciple such as Ṣhiva, and says :" Mahâdeva, practise this yoga day by day."[2] The crest-gem of the greatest Yogîs will practise Yoga, and that by means of daily meditation. Though He is Himself the Creator of the world, He must worship the world before the Truth of Ṣhakti[3] can bloom in his heart. It is only when it has fully bloomed that the dualistic universe will disappear in the knowledge which draws no distinction between Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti. The disappearance of the Brahmâṇḍa will lead to the knowledge of the true substance of Brahmamayî. The Sâdhaka will now understand how the truth as to the Brahman[4] may be reached through Its universe.

To this the objection may be raised that there are not only men and women in the world, but rivers, seas, tanks, forests, groves, fields, mountains, earth, air, sky, sun, moon, planets, and stars. How will these be eliminated ? We reply that nothing will be eliminated, but everything will remain. When direct knowledge of the truth of Ṣhakti[5] is gained, the Sâdhaka will perceive that the entire Sangsâra is nothing but the wealth of the Ṣhakti of Viṣhveṣhvarî.[6] The dualistic world will then no longer appear to be inimical to Sâdhana. On the contrary, this Sangsâra will then be recognized to be a most spacious and sacred field full of materials for Sâdhana. We will fully discuss this matter in the Chapter on the worship of form (Sâkâra Upâsana) and the play of Ṣhakti (Ṣhaktilîlâ). Here we close, after giving a mere hint of the matter in connection with the subject of the necessity of Tantra.

Next, many people express an anxiety as to the possibility of attaining knowledge of this hidden Yoga during this polluted Kali age. This also is not the

[1] That is, as Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti are the objects of Sâdhana ; so are men and women, who are their vibhûtis.

[2] Jnânayoga.

[3] Ṣhaktitattva.

[4] Brahmatattva.

[5] Ṣhaktitattva.

[6] Mistress of the Universe.

place for a full reply. This much only I here say, that just as rasâyana[1] is the proper treatment for a delirious patient, so also the delirious condition of a patient is that which is proper for the application of rasâyana. By the beneficial law of nature, delirium generates such force and strength in the patient's body that, when he drinks poison, he is able easily to counteract its life-destroying, and to absorb its life-restoring, properties. Similarly, the corrupt influence of the Kali age has generated such a strong poison in the body of Jîva that in the delirium which is born in the malady of existence[2] he overcomes the life-destroying property of that mighty cure, full of the fire of Yogîs and Bhairavîs,[3] the Tântrik Mantra, and with the help of its life-renewing properties attains to the position of a conqueror of death. Consequently, the Kali age is as fit for the Tantra Ṣhâstra as that Ṣhâstra is for the Kali age.

Non-dualistic Siddhi in the attainment of knowledge of Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti existing in all men[4] and women[5] may be new to you and me, but in the domain of Sâdhana it is the utterance, ever true and eternal, of Deva. In the Kulârṇava Tantra it is said :

" The substance of the world is Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti[6]—that is to say, Prakṛiti and Purusha. Whether this truth exists or not, Kuladharma eternally exists. On account of this sovereign privilege, Kuladharma is the greatest of all Dharmas. How can that which is greatest be common to everybody ? That is to say, since qualification for Sâdhana in Kauladharma arises only after the achievement of Siddhi in other dharmas, how can it be said to be upon equality with them ?"

It is by virtue of this direct knowledge of the Brahman in the form of Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti that Tântrik Sâdhakas ever conquer the world. Strengthened by it, the Sâdhaka

[1] See p. 71, note 2. [2] Bhavaroga.
[3] Women yogîs (voginî), adepts in the Tântrik yoga.
[4] Purusha. [5] Prakṛiti. [6] See Introduction.

does not deign even to cast a look at other Shâstras. To him to whom the realization of Shiva and Shakti throughout the world is a constant achievement, the world is but an insignificant thing. Even the Brahmânda itself cannot contain the love which the Father and Mother, everywhere present in it, bear for him who has realized that Jîva is Shiva and Shiva is Jîva, whether in Suras,[1] Asuras,[2] or men, or moving, or immovable things, insects, flies, water, land, space, or in the eternal millions of moving and non-moving things. It is in the intoxication of that love that the Sâdhaka poet Râmaprasâda has said :

"The Mother is present in every house.
Need I break the news as one breaks an earthen pot on the floor ?
Jânakî goes with Râma,
Notwithstanding younger brother Lakshmana is with him.
Bhairavîs are with Bhairavas, and boys with girls.
Râmaprasâda says : 'What shall I say of mother,
Daughter, wife, sister, or other ?'
Think for yourself."[3]

Tantra Shâstra has discovered the hidden path by which one may learn the monistic truth through the dualistic world. It has immersed the world of Sâdhakas in the current of the divine Bliss[4] by now changing duality into unity, and again from the latter evolving a dualistic play. It has proclaimed the wonderful glory of the beloved spouse of Paramashiva in the love-embrace of Matter[5] and Spirit.[6] At the sight of all this, one feels as if duality and non-duality were two boys who, quarrelling with each other and

[1] Devas. [2] Demonic spirits.
[3] These are all aspects under which the Mother exists in the world.
[4] Literally, current of the rasa of Brahmânda.
[5] Jada. [6] Chaitanya.

maddened by anger, go weeping to their mother, and stand before her in the eager expectation to see whom she will caress and whom she will rebuke. But, on the contrary, the mother instantly puts forth her two arms and takes both upon her lap, when each melts with the love she bestows upon him. Then in their love for their mother, with hearts full of, and gazing upon, her, they both forget themselves in their joy, and fall asleep on their mother's lap, her mere presence having put an end to all their quarrels and disputes. Here the Sâdhaka will receive particular help from the last song in the first part of Gîtânjali[1] entitled, "The great subject of discussion between the Tantra and the Veda is the Mother."

[1] A volume of poems by the Author.

CHAPTER III

THE EPHEMERAL AND MODERN MONISM

WE shall have to refer to many a picture painted by former accomplished Sâdhakas. Here we reproduce two modern examples, joyous and sorrowful, of dualism and non-dualism. Although it is not a picture of pure non-dualism, as advocated by the Vedânta, yet we refer to it as having been drawn in that light. Sâdhakas will pardon me for such a quotation, which, though out of place in the Tantra Tattva, is necessitated by the corrupt state of things produced by a revolution in dharma. A thinker, overpowered by a dread of the dualistic world, has said :

" Thy intoxication of pride is unceasing, and Thy
desires are unending.
Thou knowest that thy body and mind pass away ;
Still thou doeth as if thou knew it not.
The seasons, tithis,[1] and months will come as before,
But thou dost not once think whither thou wilt go.
So listen, I bid you. Abandon the gunas of rajas and
tamas.[2]
Think of Him who is stainless,
And thy dangers will then cease."

To this song the high-souled Tântrik Sâdhaka Digambara Bhattâchâryya has made the following reply :

" Om intoxicates the mind. Desire is eternal.
The body is true, the mind is true,

[1] Lunar days. [2] The qualities of passion and darkness or sloth

And so is the Sâdhana of Ṣhyâmâ.[1]
Winter, summer, all six seasons,[2] come, stay, and depart.
The Sâdhana of the Mother's son endures,
And so does the kindness of the Mother's heart;
So I say to you, listen. Cease saying: 'Untrue, untrue'!
Seek the Devî, who is Herself truth.
Free then shall thou be of thoughts untrue."

The Sâdhaka will here realize the difference between the two. The non-dualist says: "Thy body and mind pass away—thou knowest this—yet still doeth as if thou knew it not." But Digambara, despite his knowledge of the ephemeral nature of body and mind, says that, though they may be ephemeral in and as part of the Sangsâra, yet "The body and mind and practice of the Sâdhana of Ṣhyâmâ are true." If the mind and body be untrue, how can I expect to reach the true and eternal Mother by doing Sâdhana with these false materials? And can you, too, think of "Him who is stainless" with your false mind? The pursuit of the false Sangsâra makes the work of the mind and body false. But the work of the same body and mind will turn out to be true if these undertake a search for Her whose substance is truth.[3] If the body and mind be false, why should your dread be true? Next, the non-dualist says: "Winter, summer, and the other seasons, the tithis, and twelve months, will come as before; but whither thou wilt go thou dost not once think."

These words, however, do not lie well in the mouth of a believer, as if there were no certainty as to where I shall go on leaving the world in which there are the tithis, and twelve months, and other seasons; as if all things chang-

[1] The Black One—a title of the Devî as Kâlî.

[2] There are six seasons—viz., Grîshma, corresponding with parts of March and April (Vaiṣhâkha Jyaishṭha); Varshâ, May, June (Âshâdha and Ṣhrâvaṇa); Ṣharat, July, August (Bhâdra and Âṣhvina); Hemanta, September and October (Kârtika and Agrahayaṇa); Shîta, November, December (Pausha Mâgha); Vasanta, January, February (Fâlguna Chaitra).

[3] Literally, the true tattva.

ing and revolving in the world will remain, but I only shall not remain ; as if this will be my final end.[1] This is much like what infidels say : " Can the body return after it has once been reduced to ashes ?"

However that may be, the believing Sâdhaka has frowned upon this lament of the transitoriness of things, and with an unflinching heart has said : " Winter, summer, six in all, come, stay, and go. The Sâdhana of the Mother's son endures, and so does the kindness of the Mother's heart." Nothing goes away anywhere for ever. Things remain at the place to which they belong. The only difference is that they go, and return as new things. As in the Sangsâra all things go, and return in a new form, so the kindness of the Mother is ever with the Sâdhaka Her son in birth after birth. Nothing is lost for ever.

The Sâdhaka will here take note of the divine vision of the accomplished devotee. " Winter, summer, six in all, come, stay, and go," but the son's Sâdhana and the Mother's kindness alone endure. Everything is ephemeral in the world which you know to be ephemeral. Only the son's Sâdhana and the Mother's kindness endure. To the eyes of the Sâdhaka privileged to know that truth, the ephemeral world also appears as eternal. Again, the non-dualist says : " I say to you, listen. Abandon the guṇas of rajas and tamas. Think only of Him who is stainless, and your dangers will cease." That is, " These guṇas are merely inimical to Sâdhana ; so drive them away ; do not tread a path infested by robbers. On the other hand, think of Him who is stainless, and your perils will be at an end." That is, He who is to be thought of is stainless. His beauty is of a pure and perfect whiteness. The guṇas of rajas and tamas are, as it were, stains. With such stains one cannot think of Him who is stainless.

Thus we must understand that the white Sattva guṇa

[1] Ecstasy—here " end."

is necessary in order to think of the white Brahman. Now, I ask, is not Mâyâ a bond, and is it not composed of Sattva as well as of Rajas and Tamas? Some day you will have to throw off that Sattva guṇa also. Perhaps you will say that constant thought of the Stainless One will cause the Sattva guṇa to fall off of itself. To that I would ask, Is that thought of yours, which can drive away even the Sattva guṇa, so afraid of the other guṇas that it cannot appear in their presence? Thinker, your thought is full of cares. That it is which makes you so thoughtful. It is because rajas-guṇa and tamas-guṇa ever maintain the false show of the Sangsâra that they have to be discarded, and the mind made to rest on the Stainless One.

It is at this point that the Sâdhaka says: "Brother, if you are a hero,[1] with the keen sword of Sâdhana in your hand, why should you be afraid of the robber? It is only the frail coward who fears him." In reliance upon the fear-dispelling name of Abhayâ[2] you cry: "Victory to Jagadambâ!" and advance to conflict face to face, and by the grace of Vijayabhairavî,[3] victory will, without doubt, be yours. See, however, that you do not destroy anything in the dominion of Râjrâjeṣhvarî. Put your foes under your feet, and then you will see that these very enemies will be charmed by your dauntless bearing, and become your obedient servants, and will be to you like sons, friends, and attendants. Then joy will overpower you at the sight of the eternal and the transitory playing with one another. Do not despise anything as untrue. Digambara the Sâdhaka has therefore said: "So I say, listen. Give up repeating, 'Untrue, untrue!' Seek the Devî, who is truth Herself, and you will be free of untrue thoughts. Just so long as the truth[4] of Her whose substance is truth itself does not possess

[1] Vîra.

[2] The Devî as dispeller of fear. The true Tântrik is essentially the fearless one.

[3] Devî of victory.

[4] Tattva.

the mind, so long the world will appear to be fleeting. When, however, the rays of the beauty of the Mother who is Truth itself come to fill the heart, when the eyes are filled with the vision of the Mother, then the variegated picture of the world is merged in the Mother's Self."

In whatever direction I turn my eyes I see nothing, nothing but the Mother. In water, on land, and in space the Mother dances before the eyes of the Sâdhaka, to whom the world thus appears true. When the world becomes full of the Mother, then all the guṇas cease to be enemies. Nothing is then a stain. It is no longer necessary to regard the world as stained, and to look upon another as stainless. When the Mother, painted with brilliant collyrium,[1] dispeller of the fears of Her devotee, seats Herself in his heart, then everything, be it stained or stainless, becomes but the ornament of Her lotus feet. When great waves of emotion rise in the ocean of the Sâdhaka's love, then the three worlds sink in the surging billows of its waters. The lustre of the black[2] beauty of Her who charms the three worlds, falling thereon, lays open the gate of Brahmâṇḍa. Maddened with joy, the Sâdhaka then also opens the door of his heart, and sings :

" He who takes shelter at the feet of Ṣhyâmâ
Never goes to the house of Death.
Whose heart and soul revels to drink the nectar of
Ṣhyâmâ's name,
Whose thought and meditation Ṣhyâmâ fully possesses,
For him, in life and death, Ṣhyâmâ is his death's
destruction.
Opening wide the portals of heaven and earth,
Raising on high the standard in Ṣhyâmâ's name,

1 Anjana, put on the eyes to increase brilliancy, to cure redness, burning of the eyes, etc.

2 Ṣhyâmâ, a name also of the Devî as Kâlî.

By his own strength he goes to the cremation-ground;
Yet, having attained Ṣhivahood, he does not become a corpse.
How can he become a corpse whose Yoga has been done on hundreds of corpses ?[1]

He who holds in the cage of his heart the Ṣhyâmâ bird[2]
Makes Ṣhyâmâ one with the Self,
And ever beholds the Self in Ṣhyâmâ.
In love and with joy Ṣhyâmâ, uniting with the Self, dances.
Oh, the hair of my Ṣhyâmâ is dishevelled !
In Her black hand She holds a black sword;
The dark moon adorns Her dark tresses;
On Her dark face a dark smile plays,
The dark rays of Her body darken the face of the three worlds.

The spirit (Âtmâ) is Ṣhyâmâ,
The body is Ṣhyâmâ,
The Sangsâra is Ṣhyâmâ,
Ṣhyâmâ is one's home.
Nothing exists but Ṣhyâmâ.
Delusion also is full of Ṣhyâmâ.
In the false vision, which is Ṣhyâmâ,
The only cure of this Ṣhyâmâ malady
Is a draught of the pure nectar of Ṣhyâmâ's name.
Oceans and rivers and all other waters
Become one in the waters of dissolution;[3]
All these are but corpses at the feet of Ṣhyâmâ.
The memory of Ṣhyâmâ fills the Sangsâra with Ṣhyâmâ.
When shall the form of Ṣhyâmâ meet my gaze
In the form of corpses and in the form of Ṣhiva ?"[4]

[1] Referring to the Tântrik Ṣhavâsana, or posture in which the fearless Tântrik performs his rite, seated on a corpse.
[2] An Indian bird of that name.
[3] Pralaya.
[4] The above verses are from the Author's Gîtânjali.

The community of Sâdhakas will consider whether he is non-dualist or duality itself, the mirror of whose heart reflects the scene :

"The spirit is Ṣhyâmâ ;
The body is Ṣhyâmâ ;
The Sangsâra is Ṣhyâmâ.
Ṣhyâmâ is one's home, and ocean and rivers
And all other waters become one in the waters of dissolution."

Difference between and Similarity of Veda and Tantra.

The world, of course, appears to be thus blissful in the eyes of every Sâdhaka, be he Vaidik or Tântrik, who by the grace of Ânandamayî has attained Siddhi. There is, however, this difference, that the Tântrik Sâdhaka does not—in this unlike the Vaidik Sâdhaka—see a hell in the Sangsâra. The hateful and hideous picture which the Vaidik Sâdhaka has drawn of the Sangsâra, full as it is of wife, sons, friends, attendants, and other relations, is enough to create a revulsion in the mind of even an ordinary man. But it is a matter for great wonder that Tântrik Sâdhakas have discovered the play of the waves of Brahma-Bliss in this very Sangsâra, and have pointed out, as it were with the finger, that the every process of cause and effect which obtains in the Sangsâra is in a direct manner the stairway of Sâdhana. It is a matter of still greater wonder that Tântrik Sâdhakas, like fish, move and yet remain unsoiled in the mud of worldly actions, the mere contact with which would send you or I to perdition.[1] That pure transparent heart of his is not soiled or stained by anything. Even in the midst of fierce waves he remains as free as the petals of a lotus in water. A Vaidik Sâdhaka, also, on attaining Siddhi, does not think of the Sangsâra as being anything but Brah-

[1] Rasâtala.

man. There is, however, this much difference, which we may illustrate as follows:

Let us imagine that there is in a forest an ancient royal palace, the inner rooms of which are adorned with untold treasures. I approach the building with a desire freely to see or to take them. But such a foul stench comes from all sides that it is difficult to stay there for even a minute. Unable to settle what to do, I look about in every quarter. I find that at my very side there is a flight of stairs. The lower wall bears elaborate ornaments, but the stench prevents me from standing there to closely examine it. In particular, I note that, though there is ornament, there is no sign of a door whereby to enter the house. I am therefore obliged slowly to ascend by the flight of stairs, and with good fortune find myself at the top of the building. I there find that the entrance door of the palace is wide ajar, as if to welcome visitors. Entering by that door, I descend by a staircase, and in every room discover proof of the incomparable wealth of the King of Kings illuminating it with the lustre of its beauty. Whilst gazing with astonishment I descend into the lowest room. I then see the leaves of a side door flung open at my very side, through which another visitor enters into the building. Astonished and curious, I say to Him: "Sir, I did not know that there was a door here. When I came I examined the wall for a long time, but could only discover ornament, and not a door." The new-comer laughs, and says: "There was, of course, the door, but you could not find it." I again say: "But you found it. How was it that I did not?" He says: "You came by the right path, but I by the left one,"[1] upon which the following dialogue ensued:

I. What is the difference between the two paths, New-comer?

[1] That is, that of the Veda and Tantra (*vide post.*)

N. The decorations of the right path merely beautify the wall, whilst in the left path there is, besides beauty, a device whereby the lines of a door are worked into it.

I. How came you to know of this device ?

N. By the instruction of the Guru.

I. But how came the Guru to know of it ?

N. By command of the Great Architect who built this edifice.

I. When you pushed, did the door at once open, or was a key required ?

N. A key was required.

I. Where did you get the key ?

N. Gurudeva gave it to me.

I. But how were you able to stand in that foul smell ?

N. The bad smell is on the right path only. The left path is ever pleasant, fragrant with the scent of full-blown flowers, and illumined by their beauty.

Upon this I am very much astonished, and ask :

I. As both are paths to the royal palace, why, then, this difference between the two ?

N. (*laughing*). The portion on the left is the inner apartment.[1] Seekers of justice and favour and payers of taxes alone pass along the right path. It is their evil conduct and contact which renders the path on the right so miserable. But should anyone amongst those who have more intimate acquaintance with the royal family desire at any time to see the Queen of Queens (Râjrâjeṣhvarî), he goes along the path on the left.

I. What intimate connection, then, have you with the royal family ?

N. The Queen our Mother is my dharma-mother.[2]

[1] Antahpura, occupied by the ladies, who in all Hindu households live in the zenana, apart from the men.

[2] Persons not connected by blood, but who entertain tender feelings for each other, establish such relationship by making Dharma their witness.

I. In our country the relationship between a dharma-mother and a dharma-son is a very distant one. How, then, do you call it intimate ?

N. I have said She is my dharma-mother.

I. But what of that ?

N. You have said that in your country a dharma relationship is a very distant one, but in this our royal palace the relationship is very intimate, so I say She is no mother according to your dharma, but my dharma-mother.

I am abashed, and, taking him with me, leave the house. Standing by the sides of the door, I mark with his help the places of juncture. I see that the lines meet in such a fashion that one cannot avoid giving innumerable thanks to the artist, and showering a thousand curses on the blindness of one's own eyes. The edges of the door leaves are so neatly formed that it is not possible to discover them without knowledge of the secret sign. Looking with ordinary eyes, one sees nothing but decorations in the wall. Moreover, one is likely to receive a sudden fright at the sight of the snake-like markings to be found at every joint. However that may be, I am happy to see and hear. But I ask myself why, in spite of the existence of this path, I took the needless trouble to traverse one which was so circuitous.

Sâdhaka, the " I " of this dialogue, is a Vaidik, and the new-comer a Tântrik Sâdhaka. The building is our gross[1] and subtle body.[2] The foul smell which surrounds it is egoism, attachment, delusion, affection, hatred, shame, anger, fear, slander, and the like. The flight of stairs is the succession of Sâdhanas. The open door at the top of the edifice is knowledge of Tattva.[3] The store of jewels therein is Siddhi or Brahmavibhûti.[4] The paths to the left and right are the Tantra and Veda respectively. The key is the Tântrik Mantra given by

[1] Sthûla, or material body of food.

[2] Sûkhsma, the subtle body.

[3] The Brahman. [4] Power, wealth, and manifestation of Brahman.

the Guru. The decorations of the wall are the mechanism of the human body. The door leaves in the wall are the Mulâdhâra,[1] and the snake-like markings are Kulakuṇḍalinî Herself.[2] What else remains to be understood cannot be revealed. This much alone we can disclose. The rest the Sâdhaka will understand of himself. The Vaidik Sâdhaka does not enter the house,[3] or even wait a minute on the ground-floor, for fear of the foul smell. He has no knowledge of the Shaṭchakra.[4] In deep disgust he goes up, and there attains the knowledge of the unity of the Jîva[5] and the Brahman, which is the meaning of all such great sayings as "Thou art that."[6] But from the moment that knowledge of "That thou art" causes him to see the Brahmâṇḍa as a Brahmavibhûti,[7] he slowly acquires knowledge of the truth as to Jîva through knowledge of Brahman. And then, not to speak of the ground-floor,[8] even the despicable hell of foul smell which surrounds it appears to him as nothing but the Brahman. On acquiring this Siddhi, the world no longer has any terror for him. Then the Vaidik Sâdhaka at last comes to see the Brahmavibhûti in the Sangsâra.[9] On the other hand, the Tântrik Sâdhaka renounces the Sangsâra whilst seeing the Brahmavibhûti in the Sangsâra itself.[10]

1 The lowest of the six chakras (Shaṭchakra), or centres in the body, situate in the perinæum, between the genital organs and anus.

2 The Devî who abides in this chakra, coiled round the Svayambhû Linga (see the Shaṭchakra Nirûpaṇa, edited by Arthur Avalon, and Introduction).

3 That is, on the ground-floor of the Sangsâra, with its senses and passions.

4 Doctrine of the six chakras or centres in the body, which is one of the fundamental principles of the Tântrik Yoga.

5 The embodied spirit, which is one with Brahman.

6 The Mahâvâkya of the Upanishads (Tat Tvam Asi), which establishes this unity

7 That is, he sees the universe as a flowering of that tree which is God's power.

8 The Sangsâra, or transitory world.

9 That is, the display of the Brahman in the Sangsâra itself which is but Its aspect to us.

10 He neither denounces the Sangsâra nor becomes attached to it, recognizing it to be, what it is, the display of the Brahman to us.

Although the latter is full of foul smells, his nostrils are pleased with a divine fragrance, nor has the Sangsâra power to make its own foul smell perceptible or to quench this fragrance. For who can quench that sweet perfume which by a natural law proceeds from its navel,[1] and spreads over a yojana ?[2] And, similarly, when the Kula-kuṇḍalinî Mantra, with its fragrance of musk, awakes in the cave of the Mulâdhâra at the base of the Sâdhaka's navel, the universe becomes filled with fragrance, which intoxicates the world. The Sâdhaka himself, overpowered by his own joy, scatters the lustre of that joy throughout the Sangsâra. Such would also be the case were the Sangsâra really a hell. But, in fact, and when viewed with discernment,[3] the Sangsâra is neither a heaven nor a hell. It is only that which is its root ingredient.[4] Just as, by whatever name you or I may call a thing, whether cup, jar, bowl, or vessel, it remains in reality nothing but earth ; just as, by whatever name you or I may call a thing, whether earring, bracelet, or necklace, it is in reality nothing but gold ; just as water is water, whether you call it a river, lake, or sea ; so the Brahmâṇḍa, by whatever name we may call it, husband or wife, father or son, friend or stranger, is but one or other aspect of the Brahmamayî.[5] You or I may not understand or admit it. But call upon all Dharmas,[6] all Dharma-ṣhâstras,[7] and all the religious bodies on earth, and ask them. None will be able to deny the glaring truth told in Chaṇḍî :[8] " O Thou all-pervading Devî, Thou art the Ṣhakti[9] in all things spiritual[10] or gross,[11] whatsoever or wheresoever they be. How is it possible to hymn Thy praise ?"

[1] Nâbhi, as in the case of the musk deer.

[2] A distance of eight to nine miles.

[3] Viveka.

[4] That is, it is only that which it really is—an aspect of the Brahman.

[5] The Devî, or God.

[6] Codes of religion, duty, etc.

[7] Scripture touching the same.

[8] The most sacred portion of the Mârkaṇḍeya Purâṇa, reciting the actions and praises of the Devî.

[9] Power.

[10] Sat.

[11] Asat.

The whole world will surely and loudly admit the truth of this Ṣhâstrik Tattva. What, then, will you hate as being a hell, or foul smelling? In the Vaidik path the perception of this truth is the fruit of Sâdhana; in the Tântrik path it is both the root and the fruit. The Vaidik Sâdhaka first tastes the sweetness of the fruit, and then waters the root; the Tântrik Sâdhaka, though he does not find sweetness in the root, yet waters it in the hope that he may enjoy the sweetness of the fruit. This is the reason why fruit ripens on the Tântrik's tree long before blossoms appear upon the Vaidik's tree. It is impossible for a Vaidik to attain in a hundred years the Siddhi which a Tântrik has in the palm of his hand in the course of one year. Tantra therefore says: "Without doubt, Jîva, during its sojourn in Sangsâra, will quickly reach the abode of liberation if he but tread the great path of Kula Dharma.[1] For this reason the protection of the Kaula Dharma should be sought."

Many, whilst admitting without doubt that the essential conclusion of all Ṣhâstra*s* is that She is all Ṣhakti, and pervades all things, yet ask: "What is the use, so long as knowledge of this fact is not realized, of worshipping according to the Tantra Ṣhâstra?" Such an objection inclines one to laughter. We in turn ask: "If the knowledge that 'She pervades all things' is realized from the very beginning, then what is the use of Sâdhana at all?" It is, in fact, the very want of that knowledge which makes all prayer and Sâdhana necessary. It is not want of knowledge which should make one desist from practising Sâdhana. On the contrary, this circumstance should increase one's attachment to it.

To prescribe giving up food because the patient has a distaste for it is not the advice of an intelligent man. On the contrary, an honest physician will advise that morsels of food be eaten every day, so that thereby the distaste for it may be overcome. In Tantra Ṣhâstra,

[1] Tântrik Dharma of the Kaula*s*.

also, the chief of Physicians[1] has given this very prescription. Different diets have been prescribed in different cases,[2] according to the nature of the disease.[3] But all the trouble and danger of which we hear nowadays in the community of Tântriks are fundamentally due to mismanagement of those diets. The patient, through greed, eats bad food. Local medical men, for the sake of self-interest (and it may be, perhaps, without knowing the condition of the patient), will assent to his doing so. At last, when death arrives, a number of laymen will come and say that the fault is attributable to the system of medicine, and to nothing else. Similarly, through the disciple's greed and the Guru's fault, many an untimely death happens in the community of Sâdhakas. Seeing that, a number of laymen belonging to the outside world are of opinion that the fault is that of the Tantra Ṣhâstra, and of nothing else. Hearing this, many people show their intelligence by asking : " Is initiation in the Tântrik mode indispensable ?" Valihari ![4] What a conclusion! We say : Why take all this trouble, when medicine makes a distinction between good diet and bad diet imperative ? May not all treatment be dispensed with ? You and I find fault with Ṣhiva and with the Ṣhâstra, but the suffering patient plaintively says :

" Whom else shall I blame, O Mother,
But myself only and through fault of my own ?
I was mine, but said I was Thine,
And thus in a falsity I am caught."

Old men say that if both the diseased and the disease be on one side, not even the physician's father or grandfather can cure him. But as ill-fortune would have it, in

[1] Vaidyanâtha, a title of Ṣhiva.

[2] Adhikâra, which is also a division of Hindu treatises on medicine.

[3] The reader should note the following passages, which give the Author's explanation of the corruptions which have taken place in practice.

[4] An exclamation at some absurdity. As we should say "astounding."

our case the diseased, the disease, and the physician are all three on one side. That even in this state of things a few cures are taking place is due to the unfailing fitness of the Shâstra.

Consensus of other Scriptures as regards the Authority of the Tantra.

Who asks the wind to make the fire blaze? As wind comes of itself to a smoking fire, and reduces villages, towns, forests, and groves to ashes, so when the first signs of chaos in Dharma appear through the crooked influence of time, suspicious doubt and unbelief manifest themselves, and the heart of man, well furnished with the wealth of heaven, is burnt by the fire of irreligion, and reduced to ashes. Just as a fire first breaking out in a poor man's cottage gradually turns even the royal palace into a mass of charcoal, so if unbelief takes root in the mind of any member of a religious body it makes even the hearts of Paṇḍits of the greatest intellect shake. An inflammable thing burns itself and at the same time any other thing which comes in contact with it. Similarly, an unbelieving man himself falls from Dharma, and also turns others who come into contact with him into unbelievers. For this reason all Shâstras, from the Veda and Tantra to the ordinary Nîtishâstra,[1] have counselled the companionship of pious men.[2] In the course of time society has long been denied the sight of such. Moreover, impious men have proudly usurped their seats, and, though themselves deceived, deceive society. The Ṛishis were wont, sitting on the banks of a lake, to worship the Devas and the Pitṛis,[3] and to throw the offerings into the water. In the belief that the Ṛishis are there, and attracted thereby, the fish in the waters swarm near the shore, but, fools that they are, they do

[1] Prescribing good conduct. [2] Sâdhus.
[3] The "Gods" and forefathers.

not know that the Ṛishis have gone, and that their place is to-day occupied by fishermen who spread their nets. They who were wont to practise austerities and to distribute for the good of living creatures the offerings accepted by Devas have disappeared, and it is beyond the power of the ordinary man to penetrate the motive of those who have spread nets of selfishness from their place. Moreover, it is these people who lead the hosts of different sects and different Ṣhâstras. They are very often heard to say that other Ṣhâstras have no sympathy with the Tantra Ṣhâstra, and that the latter is not a Ṣhâstra, which all admit to be authoritative. By other Ṣhâstras are meant principally the Vedas, Purâṇas, Sanghitâs,[1] and Jyotisha,[2] and, following them, the Dhanurveda,[3] Âyurveda,[4] Gandharva-veda,[5] and other Ṣhâstras.

The severe blows of political and religious revolutions have left us but portions of all Ṣhâstras. The rest are lost. Ṛik, Yajur, Sâma, Atharva, Dhanuh, and Gandharva Vedas are almost entirely lost. Of Tantras, Purâṇas, Jyotisha, and Âyurveda, portions only are extant. All present criticism must, therefore, be made to rest on ruined columns. Let us suppose that three subjects have been dealt with in the beginning, middle, and end of a Ṣhâstra, and that only a portion of the first, middle, and final part of the Ṣhâstra is extant. Every intelligent man will admit that it is a very wrong inference to draw if in such a case it were said that the Ṣhâstra sought to establish only what was mentioned in that particular portion, and nothing else. It is, therefore, a sign of one-sidedness and shortsightedness to conclude that the Tantra is authoritative only if its authority is acknowledged in such fractional Ṣhâstras as are now current, and not otherwise. Next, if these current Ṣhâstras anywhere assert the Tantra to be unauthorita-

[1] Such as the Mânava and other Dharmaṣhâstras.

[2] Astrology.

[3] Veda of the art of warfare.

[4] Veda of the art of medicine.

[5] Veda of the art of music, etc.

tive, then the Tantra is authoritative; for Shâstra which disproves the Tantra must be subsequent to it. If the Tântrik cult had not been in vogue previous to such Shâstra, how could it proceed to disprove it?

According to Âryyan principles, all Shâstras are without a beginning, so that none is anterior or posterior to another. Even now, in almost all of the extant Shâstras, mention is made of all other Shâstras. Such a deeply secret tie binds them the one to the other that, should anyone slip from it, all are torn and scattered. It is, therefore, impossible for one Âryya Shâstra to disprove another. Such adverse criticisms as, despite this fact, we see nowadays paraded as "opinions of the Shâstra" on the Tantra Shâstra, are not the opinions of Âryya Shâstra at all, but the mere outcome of the activity of non-Âryyan intellects. Upon the question whether there is in reality any opposition to the Tântrik cult in the Âryya Shâstra, we shall lay before Sâdhakas a few Shâstrik authorities, so that they may for themselves see whether other Shâstras approve or disapprove of the Tantra.

Upanishad says: "The Supreme Shiva,[1] the Author of all Shâstras and ordinances, prepared the eighteen Vidyâs[2] of Shruti[3] and all the Darshanas,[4] manifesting Himself therein in play.[5] Being anxiously requested by Bhagavatî,[6] who is inseparable from His own Self, He revealed them from His five mouths in five âmnâyas[7] as the highest good.[8] The eighteen Vidyâs are the four Vedas—Rik, Sâma, Atharva, and Yajur; the four sub-Vedas—Âyurveda, Gandharva Veda, Danda Nîti, and Dhanurveda;[9] six Vedângas—viz., Shikshâ, Kalpa, Vyâkarana, Nirukta,

1 Paramashiva.

2 Branches of knowledge described *post.*

3 Revelation.

4 Systems of Philosophy.

5 That is, by incarnating Himself as the Rishis, who were their revealers or authors.

6 The Devî.

7 Teachings handed down from Guru to Guru.

8 Paramârtha.

9 Medicine, art, code of punishments, warfare.

Chhandah, and Jyotisha;[1] and Purâṇa, Nyâya, Mîmânsâ, and Dharma Ṣhâstra; and, lastly, the six Darṣhaṇas[2] —Vedânta, Yoga, Sânkhya, Mîmânsâ, Viṣhesha, and Nyâya."

We believe that no one is ignorant of the fact that a fundamental part of Tântrik Sâdhana is Shaṭchakrabheda.[3] The first aphorism[4] of the Shaṭchakrabheda comes from Upanishad itself. We are unable to quote the Vaidik Mantra in a book,[5] but for the purpose of illustration we shall refer only to its substance. It says: "One hundred and one nâḍis[6] emanate from the base of the heart. Of these, only one—Sushumnâ—passes out through the head.[7] If at death the life-giving Shakti passes upward along this naḍi, the Jîva penetrates through the gate of Sûryaloka,[8] and attains liberation. All other naḍis are the cause of the Jîva's return to Sangsâra.[9] Sushumnâ alone leads to liberation."

The same is stated in the seventh Mantra of the Praṣhna Upanishad. In the Kâlikâ, Târâ, Nârâyaṇa, Ṣhiva, Upanishads, the Nṛisinghatâpanî, Gopâlatâpanî, and other works, short but pregnant aphorisms deal with the appearances[10] of Devatâ, Mantras, Dhyâna[11] worship,[12] and other things alone related in the Tantra. This, we believe,

[1] That is, pronunciation of words, or euphony, ritual, grammar, glossary, prosody, astronomy, and astrology.

[2] Systems of Philosophy.

[3] That is, the piercing of the six chakras or centres in the human body by rousing Kuṇḍalini in the Mulâdhâra, and leading Her to and through each of them successively, by the passage of the Sushumnâ Nâḍi (see Introduction and Arthur Avalon's Description of the six centres or shatchakranirûpana).

[4] Sutra.

[5] This being forbidden.

[6] Generally translated "nerve" or "artery," but as used in the case of the Sushumnâ and other similar naḍis, the word also denotes more subtle channels of energy than the nerves and arteries of the gross body.

[7] This naḍi is centrally situated in the Merudaṇḍa, or spinal column, between Iḍâ and Pingalâ.

[8] Abode of the sun.

[9] The world.

[10] Mûrti of a Devatâ.

[11] Contemplation.

[12] Upâsana.

is not unknown to any worshipper. In addition to this, the greater part of the processes dealt with in Tantra relative to killing, driving away, and so forth,[1] is contained in the Atharvaveda. Many Vaidik Mantras have also been prescribed in Tântrik worship. Then who can say how many hundreds of Tântrik upâsanâ tattvas[2] have disappeared with the loss of hundreds and thousands of Ṣhâkhâs[3] of the Vedas? Other examples are unnecessary.

In our discussion upon the principle of Mantra, Sâdhakas will be given clear proof to show that even the Praṇava,[4] the greatest treasure and very pith of the Veda, is not outside the scope of the Tântrik Mantras. In the Nârada-pancharâtra[5] it is said: "Meditating on the six chakras, Mulâdhâra, Svâdishṭhâna, Mânîpura, Anâhata, Viṣhu-ddha, and Ajnâkhya,[6] he sees his own adored Devatâ, Ṣhrî Kṛishṇa, in his heart, seated on the lotus of a thousand petals embraced by the Ṣhakti Kuṇḍalinî, smiling, beauteous, pure, having the lustre of a young cloud,[7] garmented in yellow silk. In the following Ṣhloka[8] the great eight-lettered Mantra of Bhagavân Ṣhri Kṛishṇa is given:

"Lakshmîrmâyâ kâmavîjam 'ng'entam kṛishnapa-
dam tathâ
Vahnijâyântamantrancha mantrarâjam manoharam."[9]

1 This refers to the Tântrik Shaṭkarma, or magical powers—Mâraṇam (destruction); uchchâṭanam (driving away); vaṣhîkaraṇam (bringing under control, which would include hypnotism); stambhanam (arrest —*e.g.*, staying a storm, striking a man dumb); vidveshaṇam (causing antagonism between persons); svastyayanam (curative and helping power in disease, misfortune, and danger).

2 Forms of, or discourses concerning, worship.

3 Branches of the Veda.

4 The Mantra Om.

5 Chap. iii.

6 These are the names of the six chakras situate in the perinæum and in the regions of the genital organ, navel, heart, throat, and between the eyebrows, respectively.

7 A cloud when first formed—black with a tinge of blue from the sky behind it.

8 From chap. iv. of same work.

9 The author does not translate this verse, which, however, runs as follows: "The charming King of Mantras is Lakshmî, Mâyâ,

In the Varâha Purâṇa it is said : " Beloved, the remembrance, praise, sight, or even touch of a Chaṇḍâla[1] who is devoted to Bhagavân[2] easily purifies the world. Lady ! knowing this more than earthly power of devotion to Bhagavân, intelligent men should worship Janârdana[3] by the rites prescribed in the Veda or Âgama."[4]

In the Kâlikâ Purâṇa[5] it is said : " The Devî should be meditated upon as ten-handed, and worshipped according to Durgâ Tantra." This is merely an indication of the line of worship. The entire Kâlikâ Purâṇa follows the Tantra. All the vîjas[6] Mantras and Mûrtîs of Bhagavân Maheṣhvara[7] which are given for the Ṣhivakavacha[8] in the Brahmottara Khaṇḍa[9] of the Skanda Purâṇa are inspired by Tantra.

The Padma Purâṇa says :[10] " O Devî of beautiful thighs,[11] the religious acts of the uninitiated avail not. Such a one is begotten a beast after death. How can Jîva be beloved of Bhagavân without Vaishṇavî initiation, without the Gaurî's favour, and without Vaishṇava Dharma ?"

In the Devî Bhâgavata we read : " In this manner in the Satya Yuga[12] Brâhmaṇas used to make constant japa[13] of the Gâyatrî, Târâ, and Hrillekhâ Mantras." Hrillekhâ is a Mantra spoken of in the Tantra. Besides this, the

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Kama vîjas, together with the fourth case ending of Kṛishṇa (Kṛishṇâya), followed by the wife of fire."

Vahnijâyâ is Svâhâ, the wife of the Lord of Fire. Nor does the author give the Mantra, which is : Aing, Ṣhrîng, Klîng, Kṛishṇâyâ Svâhâ. The first three words are Tântrik vîjas (see Introduction) of Lakshmî Mâyâ, and Kâma, respectively.

[1] One of the lowest, untouchable castes. [2] God.

[3] Kṛishṇa. [4] The Tantra. [5] Ṣhâradîya Adhikâra.

[6] Tântrik " Seed " mantras, such as klîng, hrîng, shrîng, hûng, etc.

[7] Ṣhiva.

[8] Amulet of Ṣhiva, borne as an armour (Kavacha) against evil.

[9] A portion of the Skanda Purâṇa.

[10] Uttarakhaṇḍa (last part).

[11] See Lalitâ Sahasranâma ; Kâmeṣhajnâtasaubhâgya mardavoru dvâyanvitâ.

[12] The first or golden age.

[13] Recitation of Mantra (see Introduction).

whole of the Upâsanâ Khaṇḍa[1] of the Devî Bhâgavata is ornamented with garlands of Tântrik Mantras.

In the Mahâbhârata[2] we have Bhagavân Maheṣhvara's words to Daksha on the subject of his sacrifice : " O doer of good deeds, I shall again grant you a blessing. Accept it, and hear the message of this blessing with joyous countenance and attentive mind. This auspicious Pâṣhupata Vrata[3] was of yore created by me. It is a vrata extracted by me with careful consideration from the Veda with its six angas[4] and the Sânkhya and Yoga Ṣhâstras. It is performed with severe and long austerities by Devas and Dânavas[5]; hitherto known; of universal application and everlasting effect. It may be accomplished in five years, is secret, never blamed by the wise (or it is blamed by fools), and is opposed to the Dharma based on caste distinctions.[6] It is above âṣhrama dharma[7] and is practised by the great, who are not afraid of death. High-favoured Daksha enjoy, without even performing the great vrata, the great fruits which it bears to those who duly perform it. Cease to grieve at the destruction of the sacrifice. Granting this blessing to Daksha Prajâpati, Bhagavân Mahâdeva of immense might disappeared with his consort and followers." The community of Sâdhakas will understand that this great Pâṣhupatavrata was according to the Tantra. Besides this, there are many places which closely follow the Tantra. It is needless to mention them all.

Next comes the Mahâbhâgavata. It is unnecessary to say that this great Purâṇa follows the Tantra, seeing that

1 The portion of the Devî Bhâgavata dealing with worship.

2 Ṣhântiparva (see translation, Introduction, *ante*).

3 Voluntary religious vow or site (see Introduction).

4 Parts (see p. 110, *ante*). 5 Demonic spirits.

6 Varṇâṣhramadharma—relating both to caste and the âṣhrama, or stages of life : brahmachârî (student), gṛihastha (householder), vânaprastha (recluse), bhikshu (religious mendicant). Historically, the Tantra appears to represent in some degree influences contrary to caste and Brahminical claims.

7 Law and duty relating to the Âṣhrama (see last note).

it is eternally set on the thousand petals of the lotus, whereon Jagadambâ is seated, and that it is that which Bhagavân Vedavyâsa[1] declared to be only another form of Tantra. It is needless to quote any single piece of evidence from the book, for the whole of it, from beginning to end, is evidence.

In the Yoga Ṣhâstra, the philosophy of Patanjali, it is said : " Siddhi is of five kinds—namely, acquired by birth, drugs, Mantra, austerity, and ecstasy.[2] Some are in possession of Siddhi from birth, such as Kapila, Prahlâda, Ṣhuka, and others. Some get it by taking drugs, such as the Ṛishi Mâṇḍavya. Some acquire it by constant japa of the Mantra, such as the successful Sâdhakas. Others obtain it by dint of austerities, such as Viṣhvâmitra and others. Some attain to it by means of ecstasy,[3] and such are Yogîs."

All these five forms of Siddhi are the results of practice in Yoga in former births. In the present life they are simply revealed by the help of such causes as birth, drugs, Mantra, etc. That form of Siddhi which comes from constant repetition of Mantras cannot be acquired without the help of Tantra the Mantraṣhâstra. Again, according to the Tantra, it is not the highest, but the second form of Siddhi.

As to the Âyurveda, every good physician knows (as is also not unknown to Sâdhakas) that all forms of worship directed in connection with the saying of Mantra[4] over medicines, preparation of metallic drugs of the ash of mercury, and other things, as described in the Âyurveda, follow processes prescribed in the Tantra and employ Tântrik vîjas, Mantras, etc.[5] We are unable to openly quote all those Vîjas, Mantras, etc. Competent inquirers will obtain a mass of evidence by going through this Ṣhâstra.

[1] Who arranged the Vedas, wrote Mahâbhârata and the eighteen great Purâṇas.

[2] Janmaja, Oshadhija, Mantraja, Tapoja, and Samâdhija.

[3] Samâdhi.

[4] Âmantraṇa.

[5] Indian medicine is greatly indebted to the Tântriks.

In Jyotisha it is said : " At inauspicious times, such as unclean months, the following acts should not be done : commencement of education, piercing of the ear-lobes, tonsure, investiture with the sacred thread, marriage, bathing for the first time at a place of pilgrimage, seeing the Anâdidevatâ,[1] examination, enjoyment of ease, purashcharaṇa,[2] and initiation."[3] Had not the Tantra Shâstra been an ever-existent authority, how could purashcharaṇa and dikshâ have been dealt with in it ?

Smṛiti Agastya Sanghitâ says : " The Mantra, which Guru gives with satisfaction and a joyous countenance . . . performing these preliminaries and mentioning the time of solar eclipse, it has been said that the Mantra which a person receives from his Guru at that time become easily successful[4] for the Sâdhaka."

In the Mahâkapila Pancharâtra we find : " Instruction in Mantra given by Guru at the said Nakshatra, Tithi, Karaṇa, Yoga, and Vâra,[5] becomes auspicious to a Sâdhaka."

According to Pingalâ, " a Mantra, once rightly accomplished, becomes propitious even if it is not practised and worshipped (afterwards)."

In the Mantramuktâvalî :[6] " Initiated persons should duly make japa of Mantras and worship Devatâs, for no sin or uncleanliness touches the initiated who are self-controlled."

It has been said in the Nârada Sanghitâ : " Next, we shall provide for pûjâ, as prescribed in Âgama,[7] concerning persons tainted with uncleanliness."

Besides this, there is a mass of proof in Brahma Purâṇa, Shiva Purâṇa, Vishṇu Purâṇa, Mârkaṇḍeya Purâṇa, Agni

[1] Shiva lingam.
[2] A rite in which mantras are repeated a prescribed manner of times (see Introduction). [3] Dikshâ. [4] Siddha.
[5] Star, lunar day, a division of the day (of which there are eleven), conjunction, week day.
[6] Adhikâra (chapter) on Ashaucha (uncleanliness). [7] Tantra.

Purâṇa, Âditya Purâṇa, Vâyu Purâṇa, Linga Purâṇa, Nandikeṣhvara Purâṇa, Bhavishya Purâṇa, Matsya Purâṇa, Kûrma Purâṇa, Garu*d*a Purâṇa, Brahmâṇḍa Purâṇa, Brahmavaivarta Purâṇa, Matsya Sûkta, Ṣhiva Rahasya, Ṣhiva Sanghitâ, Îṣhâna Sanghitâ, Ṣhiva Dharma, Ṣhiva Sûtra, and other Ṣhâstras. Were we to quote the evidence of every book, it would not be possible to find room for them in this small volume. We are, therefore, obliged to refrain from doing so against our will.

Next, it is necessary to inquire in this connection whether there were ever any Sâdhakas or Sâdhikâs[1] initiated in Tântrik Mantras, and possessed of Siddhi therein, amongst those who were discoverers, controllers, and founders of Ṣhâstras, or amongst those who were worshipped throughout the world as successive generations of gurus for their practices, study, Sâdhana, and Siddhi in every Ṣhâstra, or amongst those who descended on earth from the Devîloka and Devaloka[2] for the establishment of Dharma, the preservation of the human race, and the promulgation of Ṣhâstra. We shall make no reference to the community of Sâdhakas coming after them. Those only we shall present here whose names the Ṣhâstras have proclaimed.

The Kûlachu*d*âmaṇi says: "Manu, Chandra, Kuvera, Manmatha, Lopâmudrâ, Maṇi, Nandi, Ṣhakra, Skanda, Ṣhiva, Krodhabhattâraka, Panchamî, Durvâsâ, Vyâsa, Sûrya, Vaṣhishṭha, Parâṣhara, Aurva, Vahni, Yama, Nirṛita, Varuṇa, Aniruddha, Bharadvâja, Dakshinámûrti, the Ganapâ, the Kulapâ, Lakshmî, Gangâ, Sarasvatî, Dhâtrî, Ṣhesha, Pramatta, Unmatta, Kulabhairava, Kshetrapâla, Hanumân, Daksha, Garu*d*a, Kâṣhyapa, Kutsa, Kunta, Yamadagni, Bhṛigu, Vṛihaspati, the Chief of the Yadus, Dattâtreya, Yudhishṭhira, Arjuna, Bhîmasena, Droṇâchârya, Vṛishâkapi, Duryodhana, Kunti, Sîtâ, Rukmîṇî, Satyabhâmâ, Draupadî, Urvaṣhî, Tilottamâ, Pushpadanta, Mahâbuddha, Vâla, Kâla, Mandara,

[1] Female Sâdhaka. [2] Abode of Devî and Devas (heaven).

Kailâṣha, Kshîrasindhu, Udadhi, Himavân, Nârada—all these are Vîrasâdhakas.[1] They have been spoken of as great Vîras,[2] and by the grace of Mahâvidyâ[3] they have attained Samâdhi in their respective lines of action."

The Jnânârṇava[4] says: "The said Vidyâ[5] is worshipped by Manu"; and the Dakshinâmûrti Sanghitâ says: "The above-mentioned Mantra is worshipped by Sûrya," and "the said Vidyâ is worshipped by Agastya," and as to another Mantra, "The said Vidyâ is worshipped by Durvâshâ."

In addition to all these, Dattâtreya, Paraṣhurâma, Viṣhvâmitra, Râmachandra, Balarâma, Ṣhrì Kṛishna, Brahmâ, Vishṇu, Maheṣhvara, Mahâkâla Himself, the imperturbable Nârada, Mâtanga, and other Bhairavas, Sanatkumâra, Gautama, Kapila, Kâtyâyana, and other Ṛishis, were all initiated in the Mantras of Tantra, and attained Siddhi therein. From the special mention of these persons as initiates it does not follow that the rest were uninitiate. Ṣhâstra has merely mentioned the names of those whom circumstance has made renowned in all the worlds, and of the names mentioned but one small sûtra has been quoted. In one word, it may be said that, amongst those whose names have been mentioned in the Âryya Ṣhâstras, Smṛitis, and Sanghitâs, those who were uninitiated in the Mantras of the Tantra are very rare.

On hearing that even Mahâkâla, imperturbable Brahmâ, Vishṇu and Maheṣhvara, Râmachandra, Ṣhrî Kṛishṇa, Gangâ, Lakshmî, Saravatî, Sîtâ, Rukmiṇî, and others, were initiated in Tântrik Mantras, let none think that their greatness was lowered thereby. Their store of greatness is not so small as yours or mine that it is liable to be dried up at every wind. The addition or subtrac-

1 That is, Sâdhakas following vîrâchâra.

2 Here one of the Tântrik divisions of worshippers.

3 The Devî.

4 In the Mantra adhikâra (chapter).

5 Feminine Mantra.

tion of one or two waves makes very little difference in a greatness which is of endless extent, unfathomable, and solemn, like a vast ocean unruffled by any wind. How can their greatness be lowered unless they worship another?[1] It is because we are talking that we are obliged to use the word " their." But from the spiritual point of view it should be " His." Sâdhaka, know it for certain that, under the names of Kâlî or Kṛishṇa, Hari or Hara,[2] it is Him whom we know—He who, moved by the sweetness of His own play, and with the desire to shed the joy of love and Brahma-bliss upon the hearts of His devotees, saves the universe in five[3] forms, though but one Brahman in reality. He is five in one and one in five, and, together with the universe, is one without a second. What other, then, is there whom He can worship? If in any form, in the course of play or in any incarnation, He has worshipped, know that worship to be nothing but the tapasyâ of Nara Nârâyaṇa[4] in the Vadarikâṣhrama,[5] the panchatapah of Jagadambâ in the Himâlaya,[6] the worship of Govardhana in Bṛindâvana,[7] the Kâtyâyanî-Vrata,[8] the love for Ṣhrî Kṛishna, and worship of Kṛishna-Kâlî by Ṣhrî Râdhikâ, and the worship of Mahâdeva by Ṣhrî Kṛishṇa, after receiving initiation from Vedavyâsa. He has made obeisance to Himself, and that not in order to worship another, but in order to preach to the world the potency of Mantra, Tapas, and Dharma. Whenever it has become necessary to preach any Ṣhakti to the religious world, He Himself has shown

[1] That is, they worship themselves. [2] Vishṇu and Ṣhiva.

[3] The panchadevatâ Ṣhiva, Vishṇu, Ṣhakti, Gaṇeṣha, and Sûrya.

[4] Nara, an ancient rishi, and Nârâyana is Vishṇu. Both did tapas in the Vadarikâṣhrama (Badarinath) in the Himâlaya. Nara subsequently incarnated as Arjuna, and Nârâyana as Ṣhrî Kṛishṇa, at the end of Dvâpara Yuga. [5] See last note.

[6] Gaurî performed the panchatapah (five penances) to secure Shiva as Her husband.

[7] Ṣhrî Kṛishṇa worshipped the mountain Govardhana.

[8] Vrata which Ṣhrî Kṛishṇa asked the Gopîs (herdswomen) to perform before the Râsa festival.

the path by acquiring Siddhi in the Sâdhana of that Ṣhakti, worship being but the means to the attainment of Siddhi. He has thus given instruction to all people. Bhagavân appears in the heart of Guru, and Himself gives His own Mantra to the disciple. In this His greatness does not suffer. How can the son learn to make obeisance to his parents unless the parents themselves show it to him? The parents of the world have, therefore, made obeisance to themselves, and so taught the world how to make obeisance to them. As His full Brahmahood is not affected by His appearance as a daughter of the Lord of Mountains as the fruit[1] of Mahâdeva's austerities and for the destruction of the demon[2] Târaka, or by his appearance as the son or daughter of Nanda as the fruit of the devotion of the herdswomen[3] and for the destruction of Kangsa and others, so neither His sole unity without a second nor His greatness are affected by His initiation in Tântrik Mantras and the attainment of Siddhi in worships prescribed in the Tantra, done to show to the world the potency of Mantra.

It is needless to point out that Dattâtreya, Gautama, Sanatkumâra, Kapila, Nârada, and other Ṛishis were Tântriks. Works such as the Dattâtreya Sanghitâ Gotama Tantra, Sanatkumâra Tantra, Kapila Pancharâtra, Nârada Pancharâtra, and others, are obvious proofs of it. Probably there is no Sâdhaka who does not know of the great Ṛishi Kâtyâyana. Drawn by the intensity of his devotion, Devî Herself assumed the form of a girl, full of youth, and appeared at the root of a bael tree on the sixth evening after the new moon, in the month of Âṣhvina, for the destruction of the Demon[4] Mahisha. Since then the Victrix of Mahisha has been worshipped in autumn[5] under the name of Kâtyâyanî, or daughter of Kâtyâyana. It is this Ṛishi Kâtyâyana who is the author of the Gṛihya[6] of the Yajur Veda.

[1] Siddhi. [2] Asura. [3] The gopîs, who loved Ṣhrî Kṛishṇa.
[4] Asura. [5] Ṣharat, the months of Bhâdra and Âṣhvina.
[6] Gṛihya, or household sûtras of that Veda.

THE DIRECT AND SUPERIOR POWER OF TANTRA.

It seems the result of some great sin even to harbour the thought that upon the favourable or unfavourable opinion of other Shâstras the authority of that Tantra depends which keeps living and safe in the shadow of its mighty arms all things moving and unmoving in the universe and world of Sâdhana from the creation of the First Self[1] to the great dissolution.[2] Authors of Smriti, Sanghitâs, Purânas, and Darshanas, have, even after the practice for ages of severe austerities, failed to discover Her, and, prostrating themselves to the earth in obeisance, have said: "O Thou whose gunas[3] are unknown to all Nigamas,[4] how can we, O Mother, describe that beauty of Thine which is visible only to Paramashiva?"[5]

Again, it has been said: "O Mother, Creatrix of all! who else is able and will dare to describe the greatness of Thy gunas, which even Brahmâ, the Lord of creation,[6] with his four mouths; the victor of Tripura, with his five mouths;[7] Kârtikeya, commander of the celestial armies, with his six mouths;[8] and Anantadeva, the Lord of serpents, with his thousand mouths,[9] are unable to describe?"

Pushpadanta has said: "If Sarasvatî herself were to write for unending ages with a pen made from an indestructible branch of the Kalpa-tree,[10] with ink in volume equal to that of the Black Mountain contained in the ocean as its pot, upon the wide surface of the earth as writing-paper, even then She would fail to record Thy gunas."

[1] Purusha or Ego. [2] Mahâpralaya. [3] Qualities, functions.
[4] Tantras. [5] The Supreme Shiva. [6] Prajâpati.
[7] Shiva called Tripurâri from his victory over the Demon Tripura, or as some say, the three cities of the Asuras. [8] Son of Shiva.
[9] Who, from under the nether worlds (pâtâla), supports the universe on his head (see Vishnu Purâna ii., chap. 5).
[10] The heavenly tree, which granted all desire as its fruit.

It is a dangerous learning which to-day makes a man, in order to prove the authority of Tantra Ṣhâstra, the word of Ṣhiva Ṣhakti (who is beyond the mind and speech of this world, Whose merciful regard the three worlds supplicate, whose meanest servants, the Yogîs, Ṛishis, Munis, Siddhas, Sâdhus, and Sâdhakas,[1] are honoured throughout the world), depend on the words of the self-same Ṛishis.

Learned man ! lay aside this learning of yours, and be not ashamed for having done so. If any have come to this world with a perverse intellect, you undoubtedly are their chief. Disputes, questionings, doubts, and misgivings on this subject arise in your and my minds. But in none of the Ṣhâstras do we find those who are to remove our doubts themselves raising a whisper against Tantra. Nowhere therein do we find it questioned whether the Tantra Ṣhâstra is authoritative or not. You will say that perhaps they had not such an all-embracing vision as we have got. But there is no "perhaps" in the matter. Such scepticism was not in their nature. You and I, though born of Brâhmaṇa parents, are to-day behaving like Chaṇḍâlas[2] through bad companionship. And so we consider it derogatory to our honour to bow our heads at the feet of our parents. But they were sons of Brâhmaṇas, and Brâhmaṇas themselves, and thus the sceptical question suitable only to a Chaṇḍâla's nature never found a place in their minds. Where there is no question, how can there be an answer ?

Just as people fearlessly enter the palace of their King at the time of payment of their yearly taxes, and seek his protection when unavoidable danger appears, so, whenever any unavoidable difficulty has arisen in matters of worship or any âdhyâtmik, âdhibhautik, or âdhidaivik danger[3] has arisen, all Ṣhâstras have stood at the door

[1] Adepts in Yoga, Seers, sages, the perfected (siddha), holy men, and religious men who practise Sâdhana.

[2] One of the lowest castes.

[3] See note 14, p. 50.

of Tantra and given instructions in its name for man's safety. And at other times, whenever there has been occasion to describe practices,[1] rules of caste,[2] history, and the like, they have timidly assumed silence, considering the saying of Tantra to be as weighty and solemn as royal messages, and beyond penetration on their part. Consequently, they do not launch into a discussion upon Tantra at every word. This is not due to want of faith, but bespeaks perfect reverence on their part.

It is in Bengal alone that we hear people, now here, now there, raising the grating cry of "Tantra, Tantra!" But in other provinces, such as Mahârâshṭra,[3] Drâviḍa,[4] Utkala,[5] Kâṣhmîra, and Nepâla, people do not call that Ṣhâstra, Tantra, but Mantra Ṣhâstra, just as people do not take the name of their fathers, but call them "Father." The meaning of this is that worship of Îṣhvara[6] is every person's daily duty, and that Mantra is essentially necessary for worship. If Mantra be necessary, then one must necessarily ask the help of a Mantra Ṣhâstra. If, in spite of such eternally valid evidence as the words of Ṣhâstra, lives of Ṛishis, immemorial practice, anyone still says "Unauthoritative" to such we, as followers of the Ṣhâstra, will reply: "The Vedas, Smṛiti and words inspired by the spirit of Dharma are authority, and if to any person all this is of no authority, then who will accept his words as authority?"

Such evidence is sufficient to prove the acquiescence of the Ṣhâstras, but the acquiescence which is required by polemics is different.

In anticipation of danger from doubt, which is the characteristic of the Kali age, the great Ordainer has made adequate provision against it. Other Ṣhâstras have repeatedly and clearly said: "The doubt of a person without faith is no example"—that is, should an un-

[1] Âchâra. [2] Varṇadharma. [3] Mahratta country.
[4] Dravidian country—Madras. [5] Orissa.
[6] The "personal" God.

believer do any work ordained of Ṣhâstra, and yet derive no benefit from it, then his case does not stand for an example, "because everywhere it is only a believer who is competent[1] for the performance of Vaidik rites." Whatever may be the reason, the Ṣhâstra will only bear fruit for those who have faith in it. The matter is, however, otherwise with Tantra. For I cannot disbelieve it even though I be the greatest and most obdurate of sceptics. I may not have faith in Veda or Ṣhâstra, in God, the next world, sin and righteousness, Heaven and Hell, yet I cannot but believe in Tantra.

Of the three forms of evidence[2]—namely, perception, inference, and Ṣhâstra[3]—the sceptic[4] may not have faith in inference and Ṣhâstra, but he yields to and accepts direct perception as the only true form of evidence. And thus, even though I be the greatest sceptic, I cannot ignore Tantra, which is a Pratyaksha Ṣhâstra[5] : "The potency of a thing does not wait upon intellectual recognition." Whether you believe it or not, medicine has power, and will cure disease. It does not wait upon your intellectual recognition of the fact. There is an inherent power in fire to burn. It will burn the hand which is knowingly or unknowingly put into it without waiting for the belief or unbelief of the owner of that hand or anyone else. Similarly Siddhi, the visible[6] fruit of the Tantra Ṣhâstra, is the outcome of its natural potency. Whether you or I believe it or not, Tantra Ṣhâstra will, when applied as directed by itself, bear visible[6] fruit. The combined determination of lakhs of persons such as you or I will not avail to prevent that. Relying on the strength of its own arms, Tantra does not recognize the efficacy of anything, call it reasoning or evidence, judgment or inference. All Ṣhâstras, in making ordinances in con-

[1] Adhikâra. [2] Pramâṇa.
[3] That is, pratyaksham, anûmânam, Ṣhabda.
[4] Nâstika, or disbeliever in the Vedas.
[5] A practical Ṣhâstra of experience. [6] Pratyaksha.

formity with Tantra, have guarded their individual honour. For as it would matter little to the sea if all the waves were to become cross and to turn their currents away from it, so it would matter little to the Tantra even if all other Ṣhâstras were to go against it.

You may rush towards a lion with marshalled herds of furious elephants, but at the moment the resounding roar is heard of the maned King of Beasts, subduing even the loudest voices, then everyone will fly, one knows not whither. Similarly, place all Ṣhâstras on one side and Tantra on the other, and then you will see that the directly perceptible[1] war cry of Mantras, resounding like the solemn booming of thunder-clouds, will make them senseless, and disperse and drive them away to places of which there is no knowing. It is because of this eternally self-evident[1] superhuman virtue of the power of Mantra that the Tantra and the Devatâ worshipped therein are eternally awake. Who will with impunity throw weapons of crooked and fallacious argument at one whose voice is guided by the Devatâ, who directs all intellects in the Brahmâṇḍa, and who dwells in every heart? The fancies of inference[2] are ever trampled under foot by direct perception.[1] Tantra has therefore said Kulaṣhâstra[3] is eternal evidence, because it bears visible[1] fruit. Putting aside the sceptics, even such animals as beasts, birds, and the like, admit visible[1] things to be evidence. It is by force of the realization of such evident[1] fruit that Tantra has destroyed all perverse arguers. Who knows what will happen in the hereafter?[4] That is the best of all philosophies[5] which bears actual and visible[1] fruit in this world." This is what Ṣhâstra says. When, however, in Society it is found that on many occasions Tântrik rites bear no fruit, doubt arises in the people's mind. We ourselves are much pleased to see and hear all this. For

[1] Pratyaksha. [2] Anumânam. [3] Tantra.
[4] That is, in the next birth. [5] Darṣhaṇa.

where they complain of a want of fruits we do not discern it. Is it not a fruit if Svastyayana[1] leads to dire consequences? Through our ill-fortune a mango-tree bears âmḍâ,[2] or through lack of intelligence we wish an amḍah-tree to bear mangoes. This it is which gives rise to the difficulty about fruit. Your and my belief that "we do a work according to Shâstra" is really a wicked vanity on our part. And it is because Shâstra and Devatâ are unable to bear with this insolence of ours that they shatter our conceit in giving us fruit the opposite of what we sought. And then we think "alas! what has happened? faith is shaken!" but if we understand the matter rightly it is only a wrong belief which is dissipated. Neither place, time, nor subject is according to faith, yet still there is the meaningless and unreasoning cry, "according to Shâstra."[3] Why should Shâstra tolerate this wrong? Shâstra ordains that a pûjâ is to be held at dead of night. But maybe, either from fear of keeping up at night or attracted by the mahâprasâda,[4] you sit in worship in the early evening. Why then should not what is begun in early evening end in misfortune. For this reason Shâstra has said: "Who does not worship Mahâvidyâ,[5] or repeat Mantras." It is only for want of one thing—namely, the proper disposition[6]—that there occurs a want of fruit. It is a very difficult thing to worship Her with a heart inspired with true feeling for Her. Râmaprasâda has therefore said: "She is to be sought through feeling. Can we without feeling find Her?"

In fact, it is great foolishness to doubt Mantra or Devatâ on account of one's own deficiencies. It bespeaks great stupidity to put out a fire by pouring water on it,

[1] A rite to dispel evil and to bring about good.

[2] A sour, skinny fruit.

[3] That is, everyone nowadays is speaking of Shâstra, but none really care for or apply it.

[4] The great food or flesh of the animal of sacrifice.

[5] The Devî. [6] Bhâva.

and then to opine that it has not the power to burn. Similarly, it is a heinous sin to misdo Tântrik work and then to doubt Shâstra. It is always the mark of a weak, feminine nature to endeavour to establish one's superiority on the issue of a verbal quarrel, whereas it is the sign of a man to desire to conquer the world by the strength of one's own arms. Similarly reasoning, argument and inference may be the work of other Shâstras, but the work of Tantra is to accomplish superhuman and divine[1] events by the force of its own Mantras. The power to destroy, to banish, and control,[2] are, with others, matters of daily accomplishment. Thousands of great and accomplished Sâdhakas still illumine all India with the glory of their austerities.[3] In every Indian cremation ground[4] the refulgent and divine halo of Bhairavas and Bhairavîs[5] is yet to be seen mingling with the light of the flames of funeral pyres, rending apart the waves of nocturnal darkness and illuminating the wide expanse of Heaven. Dead and putrefying corpses submerged[6] near cremation grounds are still brought to life by the force of the Sâdhakas' Mantras, and made to render aid to Sâdhana and Siddhi. Tântrik Yogîs even now and in this world obtain, through the potency of Mantras, direct vision of the world of Devas, which lies beyond our senses. She, with dishevelled hair, the Dispeller of fear from the hearts of those who worship Her, still appears in great cremation grounds,[7] to give

[1] Daiva.

[2] Mâraṇam, Uchchâtanam, Vaṣhîkaraṇam.

[3] Tapas.

[4] Smaṣhâna, where Ṣhavâsana, Muṇḍâsana, Latâsâdhanâ, and other Tântrik rites, are practised.

[5] Adept Tântrik men and women.

[6] Before and whilst awaiting burning, the corpse is placed in the sacred stream.

[7] Mahâsmaṣhanas, where some of the most difficult forms of Tântrik Sâdhanâ are practised. The auspicious Kâlikâ is thought of as with dishevelled hair (vigalitachikurâ), and so is the hair of the devotee (see Karpurâdi stotra, verses 3, 10).

liberation to Her devoted Sâdhakas, who, fearful of this existence, make obeisance to and supplicate Her. Sâdhakas still merge themselves in the Self of Brahman, laying their Brahmarandhra[1] at those lotus feet of Brahmamayî,[2] which are adored by Brahmâ and other Devas. The throne of the Daughter of the Mountain[3] is still moved by the wondrous, attractive force of Mantras. This, in the eyes of Sâdhakas, is the ever broad and royal road upon which they travel untiring to the city of liberation. Maybe there is nothing but darkness for the bedridden and dying blind man. Yet know that of a surety, oh blind man, that the darkness exists only in your eyes.

We are obliged to say something else. In Bengal a species of high-class creatures called "educated critics" has come into existence, who at every word are wont to say: "The Tantra Ṣhâstra is a recent production. The age of the earth is 5,000 years in all. Within this period the creation of man dates back 3,000 years. Previous to that his forebears were, according to some, frogs, and according to others, monkeys." Whose antiquarian researches have led to such discoveries? It is no wonder that they should deem the Tantra Ṣhâstra a recent thing. We, too, cannot oppose or be sceptical of their views. Even if we think we shall not believe it, our intellect believes of itself. For had not such been the state of their forebears, why should the descendants be such as they are? Alas! O Providence,[4] we know not whether you ever dreamt of such a perversion of intellect, of such a disastrous change of nature in the children of Manu. Be the idea sound or superstitious, we still say: "From the time that the Devas were established in the seven heavens,[5] on the summit of Mount Sumeru, from that time we Brâhmaṇas have belonged to the race of Brahmâ.

1 The cavity of Brahman at the top of the head, here used for the head generally. 2 The Devî. 3 The Devî as daughter of Himavat. 4 Vidhâtâ. 5 Svarga.

So long as Gangâ[1] endures on earth, we, too, shall endure in the race of Brahmâ. So long as the sun and moon shine in the sky, we, too, shall endure in the race of Brahmâ." In Ṣhâstra alone does a Brâhmaṇa live, so that the existence of Brâhmaṇas and Ṣhâstras are one and the same thing. Judging from the point of view of those for whom the creation of man is 3,000 years old, Tantra will be a recent creation of, say, a 100 years' age. Intelligent men must therefore now consider that within these 100 years only, in the midst of four or five revolutions caused by minor forms of Dharma;[2] in the course of contest with sceptics, the Tântrik Ṣhâstra and initiation have been promulgated and preached through heaven,[3] the mortal world,[4] and the nether world,[5] to the ears of every man and woman of every home in Bhâratavarsha, consisting of Chîna, great Chîna,[6] Nepâla, Kâṣhmîra, the Dravidian Land,[7] Mahârashṭra,[8] Anga,[9] Banga,[10] Kalinga,[11] Saurâshṭra,[12] Magadha,[13] Pânchâla,[14] Utkala,[15] and other countries and continents beginning from the mount of sunrise to the mount of sunset.[16] What blessed criticism![17] It is on this account that old far-sighted grammarians gave the prefix "sam" instead of any other to samâlochanâ[18] (criticism). Historical critic, what shall we say to you? Valihari![19]

There is yet another sad thing to tell. In the community of worshippers there are a few persons belonging

[1] The holy River Ganges. [2] Upadharma, used in a bad sense.
[3] Svarga. [4] Martya. [5] Rasâtala. [6] Mahâchîna.
[7] Madras country. [8] Mahratta country.
[9] Country about Bhagalpur, Tirhut. [10] Bengal.
[11] Part of Orissa described in the Tantras as from Puri to the Kṛishṇa River. [12] Surat. [13] Southern portion of Behar.
[14] Punjab. [15] Orissa.
[16] Udayâchala and Astâchala: the mountains from which the sun is said to rise, and on which it sets, respectively.
[17] Samâlochanâ.
[18] A pun; the word "sam" in Bengali meaning "a clown."
[19] A form of exclamation which literally means "I am beaten. I have no words for it. Astounding."

to the Vaishṇava sect[1] who believe that the Tantra is the Ṣhâstra dealing with the worship[2] of Ṣhaivas[3] and Ṣhâktas[4] alone, and that it is in thorough antagonism to the Vaishṇava Dharma. We do not know what to say in reply to this. To those who hold such a belief we with folded hands put the question : "What Tantra is this ?" The name of the Tantra of which they have heard from their Lords[5] is Svatantra,[6] while that which is Ṣhâstra is called Tantra. When dealing with the subject of the characteristics of Tantra, it has been said that it is that which is "approved of by Vâsudeva."[7] In this there is nothing to which a true Vaishṇava can take exception. But then we have nothing to say to those with whom the objection lies, because they are Lords.[5] When they interpret the Ṣhâstra of Devotion,[8] it seems that they are Lords of Vaishṇavas alone ; but when they sit in judgment disproving Tantra, it would seem that they are Lords of Vishṇu also ; otherwise, how can they dare to disprove the words of their Lord ?[9] If the Tantra Ṣhâstra is hostile to Vaishṇavas, we then ask by whose grace did they receive that Vishṇu Mantra, initiated in which they, in their pride of Vaishṇavism, cast sinister glances at the Tantra Ṣhâstra ? It is, indeed, a sign of great scepticism to be an enemy of Tantra after initiation in a Tântrik Mantra. We know that honest Vaishṇava Sâdhakas are never inimical to Tantra. But still, for those who are so mistaken, it is necessary to point out what the Tantra itself has to say in this respect.

Tantra says : "Kâlî alone in the Kali age, Kṛishṇa

1 Worshippers of Vishṇu. 2 Upâsanâ Ṣhâstra.

3 Worshippers of Ṣhiva.

4 Worshippers of the Goddess, or of Ṣhakti the Devî.

5 Prabhu, the title by which the gosvamîs, or religious preceptors of Vaishṇavas, are called by their disciples.

6 Svatantra means "different." There is a play on the words, the meaning of the passage being that Tantra is Ṣhâstra, but what they have heard is different, that is not Ṣhâstra.

7 Vishṇu, Lord of Vaishṇavas (see p. 84, *ante*). 8 Bhaktiṣhâstra.

9 Vishṇu, by whom the Tantra is approved (see p. 84, *ante*).

alone in the Kali age, Gopâla and Kâlikâ[1] in the Kali age, are the Devatâs who are awake."[2]

"Mahâkâlî and Mahâkâla exist in the manner of a grain of gram. Just as the grain of gram has on the outside a covering, and is in the inside divided into two equal portions closely touching each other, so the Parabrahman[3] is covered on the outside by Mâyâ, and exists interiorly as Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti in equal parts closely united the one to the other. It is this Paramâtmâ existing in the forms of Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti who is Mahârudra, Mahâvishṇu, and Mahâbrahmâ. The one only Brahman is called and differentiated by the three names Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara.[4] But he who looks upon the different forms which pass under these different names as really different never attains liberation."[5]

In the Muṇḍamâlâ Tantra[6] it is said: "So long, O Supreme Devî, as it is thought that there is a different Spirit in different beings,[7] so long only is the world multiform, activities different, and feeling diverse; Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara distinct; Gaṇeṣha, Dineṣha,[8] Vahni,[9] Varuṇa,[10] Kuvera,[11] and the Dikpâlas[12] different Devas; effort is of many kinds; beings are masculine, feminine, and neuter; bael leaves[13] are different from tulsi leaves;[14] Javâ, Drona, and Aparâjitâ[15] are different from Tulsi-leaves; the Divya, Vîra, and Paṣhu forms of worship are different;[16] the idea of difference exists in

[1] Kṛishṇa and Kâlî.

[2] That is, active; whose activities are efficacious.

[3] Literally, "Tattva of."

[4] Ṣhiva.

[5] Such as he who worships Vishṇu, thinking him to be different from Ṣhiva.

[6] Chap. vi.

[7] Jîva.

[8] The Sun.

[9] The Lord of Fire.

[10] Lord of water.

[11] Lord of wealth.

[12] The regents of the ten quarters.

[13] Sacred to Ṣhiva.

[14] The holy basil (ocymum sanctum), sacred to Vishṇu.

[15] The hibiscus, drona (a white flower) and clitoria—flowers sacred to the Devî.

[16] The three different forms of Tântrik worship (Upâsanâ); see Introduction.

Tantra ; different forms of worship are prescribed for different Devatâs ; and so long (O Mother of the world) is Hari[1] deemed separate from Hara,[2] and so long (O Ṣhivâ)[3] are Kâlî with the terrible jaws, She[4] with the beautiful matted hair,[5] Shoḍashî and Bhairavî,[6] different Devîs ; Bhuvaneṣhvarî, Chhinnamastâ, Annapûrṇâ, Bagalâmukkî, Mâtangî, and Kamalâtmikâ,[7] are different Devîs, and Sarasvatî and Râdhikâ[8] are distinct. As long as the notion of unity at the lotus feet of Bhavânî[9] does not exist, so long endeavours, activities, modes of worship, and practice are different, O Devî of fair body ! O Ṣhangkarî ![10] when perception of the truth[11] grows in the lake of the Sâdhaka's pure heart, then in the resplendent bloom of the flower of non-duality, which is the lotus feet of Târiṇî,[12] the vision of one only Brahman, not only in all Devas and Devîs, but in every being[13] in the Sangsâra, opens to the view of the Sâdhaka."

"The Sâdhaka who contemplates Maheṣhvarî,[14] knowing that She is not different from Guru,[15] Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara, and Mantra, is undoubtedly Maheṣhvara[16] Himself, even though he be a Jîva."[17]

To say that the Ṣhâstra in which such a universally accepted conclusion is the object of Sâdhanâ and Siddhi, is yet antagonistic to Vaishṇavas, though it does not harm Tantra, yet smears the spotless Vaishṇava name with the mud of indelible infamy.

To bring about harmony in place of their quarrels,

1 Vishṇu. 2 Ṣhiva. 3 A title of the Devî.
4 Târâ, one of the Daṣhamahâvidyâ, or ten great forms of the Devî.
5 Jaṭâ. 6 Forms of the Devî. 7 *Ibid.*
8 Sarasvatî is Devî of speech, and Râdhikâ the beloved of Kṛishṇa.
9 Title of the Devî ; Bhava is Ṣhiva. The Devî and Vâyu Purâṇas say that the Devî is Bhavânî, as giving life to Bhava.
10 Ṣhangkarî is feminine of Ṣhangkara, a title of Ṣhiva.
11 Tattva. 12 Title of the Devî, as Saviour. 13 Jîva.
14 Title of Devî, as spouse of Ṣhiva, Maheṣhvara.
15 Religious preceptor. 16 Ṣhiva.
17 An embodied spirit ; here, "man."

Pushpadanta has said in the Mahimnastava :[1] " All the conflict of opinion which exists in the threefold Ṣhâstra,[2] Sângkhya,[3] Yoga, cult of Paṣhupati,[4] and Vaishṇava Ṣhâstra,[5] is due to differences of ideas, and is nothing but the doubt whether this or that is the right path. But, O Lord ! just as the waters of all rivers, in whatever direction they flow, and whether in straight or sinuous course, mingle in the end in one great ocean, so Sâdhakas (whatever be the path they follow) are at their journey's close sure to meet each other in Thee Who art the one only ocean of Unity."

Sâdhaka, know it for certain that that is the final conclusion of every Ṣhâstra, be it Veda or Tantra.

There are present-day Vaishṇavas who revel in daily new emotions,[6] who are not satisfied with the forms[7] of the ten incarnations[8] of Bhagavân, or the four armed Nârâyaṇa Vâsudeva dwelling in Vaikuṇṭha,[9] nor even with the conjoined[10] form of Bhagavân Ṣhri Kṛishṇa, the perfect incarnation,[11] and who in many instances abandon the Chaitanyaless[12] Mantra of Vishnu and Kṛishṇa worshipped by their forefathers, and received by them at the time of initiation, and get initiated in a Mantra which has Chaitanya in it.[13] Amongst such people

[1] Hymn in praise of the greatness of Shiva.

[2] Trayî—the Veda. So called because it consists of the three things —song, prose, and verse ; or because the first three Vedas are alone included.

[3] Philosophical school. [4] The Tantra.

[5] Ṣhâstras dealing with the cult of Vishṇu. [6] Rasa.

[7] Mûrti. [8] Avatâra of Vishṇu. [9] Vishṇu's heaven.

[10] Yugalamûrti, or that in which the persons of both Kṛishṇa and Râdhâ are shown together.

[11] Pûrṇa avatâra. [12] See next note.

[13] There is here both pun and sarcasm. Chaitanya means consciousness or intelligence, and is also the name of the celebrated Vaishṇava Saint who is the head of a large section of the Vaishṇavas. The meaning is that some people have the audacity to think that the Mantra of Vishṇu is without chaitanya (achaitanya)—that is, without consciousness—because not associated with the Saint Chaitanya and to think that a Mantra associated with the same Chaitanya has alone consciousness (sachaitanya).

there are many who say that it were better if Tantra Ṣhâstra ceased to exist. They have both the daring and the opportunity to say this because, considering the nature of the daily novel Mantras in which they are initiated, and which are found neither in Veda, Purâṇa, nor Tantra, the existence of the Tantra Ṣhâstra is a source of danger to them. However that may be, it is not necessary to waste time in writing about them. The only refuge of the Hindu race is the tree of Veda, which is manvantaras[1] and kalpântaras[2] old. The five forms[3] of Tântrik worship are its five branches.

It is by no means impossible that now, towards the end of the Kali age, a few parasites should be found growing on some of its branches. Those, however, who know the original tree will recognize the parasites the moment they see the leaves. However that may be, we do not consider them as included in any of the five communities of worshippers, and are therefore unable to accept their opinion as that of Hindu society. We know them only as Vaishṇavas who are initiated according to Ṣhâstra in Vishṇu Mantras. If they want to destroy the Tantra Ṣhâstra they will simply destroy themselves, because the Vishṇu Mantras themselves are stated in Tantra alone. To become inimical to Tantra owing to enmity with Ṣhâktas,[4] caused by difference in practice, is like turning a father out of home because of a quarrel with a brother.

There is another thing of which we are ashamed even to think. We are really pained to see so much anger and enmity in Vaishṇavas who worship such an amiable, peaceful, smiling, and sweet-faced Devatâ, and who daily eat havishya[5] without flesh. If in this matter they were

[1] A manvantara is a fourteenth part of a Kalpa (see next note).

[2] A Kalpa, or day of Brahma, is 4,320,000,000 years.

[3] Vaishṇavas, Ṣhaivas, Ṣhâktas, Sauras, Gâṇapatyas.

[4] Worshippers of Ṣhakti, or the Devî.

[5] A very pure form of food, prepared with fruit, vegetable, and rice (see Introduction).

to ask their Gurus, instead of venting independent opinions of their own, then we, too, shall be saved. If Tantra Ṣhâstra be deemed merely the Ṣhâstra of the Ṣhâktas, then by the grace of what Ṣhâstra have Vaishṇavas and the Gosvâmîs of the well-known families of Advaita, Nityânanda, and others, who are Gurus of the Vaishṇavas, and who give initiation, preserved their great glory so long? Blinded by anger, people often forget their relation with others, and abuse them, but that is another matter. As a fact, both Ṣhâktas and Vaishṇavas are equally initiated in Tântrik Mantras. The authority of the Ṣhrîmadbhâgavata is held by the Vaishṇavas in much higher esteem than that of any other Purâṇa or Tantra. That Ṣhrîmadbhâgavata[1] says: "He who would free himself of the bond of the heart should worship Bhagavân in the manner prescribed in Tantra." Again, after referring to the forms of worship prescribed in both Veda and Tantra, it refers separately to the Tântrik form of worship for the Kali age, and says: "Hear also how worship is to be performed in the Kali age according to the ordinance of various Tantras."

Commenting on this verse Ṣhrîdharasvâmî says: "By a separate reference again the superiority of the Tântrik path in the Kali age is shown."

In the same work Bhagavân counselled Uddhava, the crest-gem of devotees, as to what should be done in His own worship. "In all parvas[2] in the year provision should be made for Jâtrâs[3] and Valis[4] in my honour. Vaidik initiation[5] and Tântrik initiation[5] should be received successively, and the Châturmâsya,[6] Ekâdaṣhî,[7] and other Vratas[8] should be observed." Again, "All

[1] Eleventh Book.

[2] Auspicious tithis (or lunar days) for religious observances.

[3] Festivals in the worship of Kṛishṇa, such as Rathajâtrâ, Dolajâtrâ, Snânajâtrâ.

[4] Worship (pûjâ) with offerings. [5] Dikshâ. [6] Four monthly.

[7] On the eleventh lunar day after new or full moon.

[8] Occasional and voluntary religious observances (see Introduction).

articles of pûjâ, such as water for washing the feet,[1] for sipping,[2] and the others,[3] should be set out in order. Marking out a seat for me with Dharma and other Ṣhaktis, nine in all, make therein a lotus of eight petals bright with the pollen of its womb. Then worship me with Mantras prescribed in both the Veda and Tantra Shastras for the attainment of siddhi in both." Here Ṣhrîdharasvâmî has in his Commentary laid down that worship, according to both Veda and Tantra, is requisite for the acquisition of both enjoyment[4] and liberation,[5] as stated in both Veda and Tantra. "Worship of me is of three kinds—namely, Vaidik, Tântrik, and mixed (that is, Vaidik and Tântrik and mixed, or Paurâṇik). I should be duly adored according to all the three forms."[6] "If the Sâdhaka adores me by the Vaidik and Tântrik paths of Kriyâyoga,[7] he will receive from me siddhi in both Veda and Tantra."

We ask those who have faith in Bhagavân and the Bhâgavata whether they have faith in these commands of Bhagavân, as stated in the Bhâgavata. Now the Sâdhaka, who stands arbitrator in the dispute, will see whether the Tântrik initiation and Scripture do not form the very life's stay for the Vaishṇava who follows Ṣhâstra. When the time for the dissolution of a family comes, we find that both inmates and outsiders become of the same mind, and so through the misfortune of the present Âryyan society we find that in many cases to be so.

1 Padyam.
2 Âchamanam.
3 That is, the other (ordinarily fourteen) upachâras.
4 Bhoga.
5 Moksha.
6 The author's Bengali translation appears here to differ somewhat from the Sanskrit, which runs: "Trayâṇâmîpsitenaiva vedhinâ mâm samarchchayet," or "I should be adored by whichever of the three forms it is desired."
7 Yoga of work.

CHAPTER IV

ON THE GÂYATRÎ MANTRA[1] AND IMAGE WORSHIP[2]

ALTHOUGH all admit that the Gâyatrî is the fundamental part[3] of worship as directed in Ṣhâstra, yet the characteristics of the present time make it necessary to consider it both in some degree separately, and also in connection with Tantra. For there are nowadays some who even ask : "What is the necessity for the adoption of Tântrik Mantras when there is the Vaidik Gâyatrî ?" The reply is that there is no necessity if necessity for initiation ends with initiation ; but those who, on the contrary, have to perform worship based on initiation must certainly be reinitiated according to the Tantra. For in the Kali age worship of Gâyatrî is not possible according to the Vaidik method. Without reinitiation in Tântrik Mantra, worship of the Gâyatrî even cannot be considered to be accomplished. Should anyone on that account regret because he thinks the Gâyatrî is disgraced thereby then Gâyatrî Herself[4] will judge the matter. But there is no cause for lament. There is no fear that the line will fail even if the son should feel himself insulted and therefore die, when the grandson is taken in the arms. It is asked what is the necessity ? But we ask where is even the want of it. Who will say

[1] Gâyatrîtattva. The Gâyatrî, is the famous Mantra, the essential tattva of Vedas: "Om, let us contemplate upon the wonderful spirit of the Divine Creator of the terrestrial, atmospheric, and celestial regions. May he direct our minds (towards the acquisition of Dharma, Artha, Kâma and Moksha)." (See Introduction.)

[2] Sâkâra upâsana. [3] Tattva.

[4] For the Mantra is the Devî Herself.

that the boy who has passed the matriculation examination will not in time be eligible for studies suitable for a degree examination? However that may be, more of this hereafter. At present let us discuss what Gâyatrî is according to Âryyan notions. Is the Gâyatrî mere words or Mantra? If it be merely the former, how can it be so supreme as to be accepted as the fundamental part[1] of worship, the supreme Brahman Himself? If the glory of Gâyatrî is due merely to its being a great saying, weighty and solemn, pure, full of sense and truth, then there are hundreds of thousands of great sayings in the Âryyan Ṣhâstras which are equally replete with truth, and marked with more feeling and sweetness. Why, instead of worshipping them, do we worship Gâyatrî alone as the essential portion[1] of all the Vedas? Why am I, whether learned or ignorant, with or without understanding, called a Brâhmaṇa provided I am initiated according to Ṣhâstra in the Gâyatrî Mantra? Putting aside the world, why has the Lord of it said: "Every Brâhmaṇa is my body, be he learned or unlearned." In Ṣhrîmadbhâgavata, Ṣhrî Bhagavân has said: "Even this four-armed form[2] dwelling in Vaikuṇṭha is not dearer to me than a Brâhmaṇa. A Brâhmaṇa is full of all Vedas, and I, too, am full of all Devas." That is to say, the world is maintained by both Veda and Devatâ, and both are therefore equally worshipful. But as all Vedas and myself who are full of all Devas, unite in the Brahman body of a Brâhmaṇa, the latter is the most worshipful of all.[3] "Malicious and misguided men who know not this truth slight me who am the all-pervading Supreme Spirit, the Guru of the three worlds, and Brâhmaṇa in form, by worshipping my images and symbols only" (that is to say, by omitting to worship a Brâhmaṇa as Bhagavân). Manu says: "On the birth of a Brâhmaṇa, Îṣhvara Himself[4] is born on earth in order to guard the sheath of

1 Tattva or principle. 2 Mûrti.
3 A Brâhmaṇa is called "earth-deva" (Bhudeva). 4 The Lord

Dharma of all creations." For him who neglects the Gâyatrî, Shâstra again says in the Gâyatrî Tantra : " It is the embodied spirit of a twice born person formed of Gâyatrî who is the worshipper of Devatâ, and not the body nor senses, nor anything else. Vishṇu, Shiva and other Devatâs are fit objects of worship for him only who is such a Devatâ. A Brâhmaṇa who neglects the Gâyatrî should not touch tulsi leaves nor take the name of Hari. A twice born who neglects the Gâyatrî is like the lowest Chaṇḍâla. What will he gain by worshipping Shrî-Kṛishṇa ? If through illfortune a miscreant who forsakes Mantra, Guru and Deva is born in one's family, he as well as all his kith and kin of the same gotra[1] should do expiation for it. An effigy made of fifty kusha leaves should be burnt according to the rules prescribed in Veda. Otherwise his sin will soon enter into all his relatives of the same gotra, and such as come in contact with him will share in his guilt. In the Kali age the number of such sinners will daily and particularly increase." Again in the same Tantra it is said : " The twice born who through wilfulness or neglect omits to do japa[2] of the Gâyatrî is of a surety born of the seed of a Yavana.[3] The Brâhmaṇa who is without faith in even the Gâyatrî is, O Devî, truly a Yavana, and being such how can he repeat the Gâyatrî ? Fallen is the country in which that sinful Yavana dwells, and fallen also is the Ruler of that country. Brâhmaṇas who associate with him are fallen and infamous. Food given by a person who neglects the Gâyatrî is worse even than food given by a Yavana. It were better to partake of the food of a Yavana than even to drink water brought by a sinner who neglects the Gâyatrî."

Why ? Why is it that the influence of a few words makes a man worthy of adoration by Devatâs ? and again, why is it that the want of those few words makes him the

[1] Lineage. [2] Recitation of Mantra (see Introduction).
[3] Foreigner.

lowest Chaṇḍâla, lower than a Yavana ?[1] The Ṣhâstra has neither enmity nor friendship with Jîva. It rebukes none and caresses none. It says only what is true. If anyone's feelings are wounded on account of the statement of a truth, then not he who utters that truth but the truth itself must be considered the cause, and therefore inquiry should be made into that. The truth about Jîva will be revealed if the true principles[2] concerning Gâyatrî, according to Ṣhâstra, are discovered. In fact, it is because we do not know the true nature[2] of Gâyatrî that we hear of all these "why's." The moment we realize the true aspect of Gâyatrî then no "why" will remain. Then we shall understand that there can never be distrust in Gâyatrî unless a Brâhmaṇa's nature becomes fundamentally corrupt, and that in such case the epithets of Chaṇḍâla and Yavana are not exaggerated, but merely appropriate expressions. The authors of Ṣhâstra knew at least as well as you or I that it is of little moment whether a few words are said or not. You or I have not done well in thinking that the Gâyatrî, which even a muni,[3] who has taken a vow of silence, may not omit to inwardly repeat without ceasing to be a twice born, is mere language and words. It should be understood that that which makes a Brâhmaṇa by its presence and a Yavana by its absence is not mere language, but the great supersensual Mantrashakti[4] which controls the Brahmâṇḍa, and appears as eternal consciousness ; and that what we have taken for mere words and feet of verse is not so, but a great Mantra full of brilliance appearing in the form of characters replete with transcendent principles[2]. A firestick[5] may be only an ordinary piece of wood to a Ṣhavara[6] gathering fuel in the forest, but to the performer of sacrifice with fire it is a veritable womb which bears luminous fire. Similarly the Gâyatrî may appear

[1] Foreigner.

[2] Gâyatrî Tattva, or the nature of or principles concerning Gâyatrî. In a general way Gâyatrî Tattva means the subject of Gâyatrî.

[3] Sage or saint. [4] Mantra power. [5] Araṇi. [6] Chaṇḍâla.

only a string of letters to an unbeliever, but to a Sâdhaka of divine wisdom it is a very mass of radiant shining energy[1] of Mantra. Just as when, sitting even in a dark room, the sacrificer lights the sacrificial fire by the friction of fire-sticks, and by casting the offerings in that fire offers full oblation[2] in homa,[3] so the sâdhaka living in the deep dark sangsâra illumines the cave of his heart with the light of Brahman,[4] kindled by the friction of mind and Mantra. He then offers to that burning fire of the Parabrahman in the fire-pit of consciousness[5] existing as mind engirdled with the three guṇas, all the three forms of action done in waking, dream, and dreamless sleep, whether sâttvik, râjasik, or tâmasik,[6] and whether by mind, speech, or action, and lives in a state of constant and perfect liberation.

The effect of mere language is to produce ideas of skill and emotions and sweetness, whilst that of Mantra is to stimulate the mental faculties with the divine radiant energy,[7] and to thus lead to a full understanding of constantly visible supersensual realities.[8] A mere collection of words is something gross, whilst Mantra is full of consciousness. A word is a mere display of letters, whilst Mantra is a mass of radiant energy. Sayings give advice to men of the world, whilst Mantras awaken[9] superhuman Ṣhakti. A mere saying is, therefore, like a Jîva, subject to birth and death ; whilst a Mantra is Brahman Himself, unwasting, undecaying. So long as there is a difference between gross matter and consciousness, between Jîva and Brahman, so long will there exist this difference between a saying and a Mantra—a difference as wide as that between the heaven and the nether world. This is why, as regards the Gâyatrî, the notion that say-

[1] Tejas. [2] Âhuti. [3] The sacrifice into fire.
[4] Brahmatejas. [5] Chaitanya.
[6] That is, possessing the characteristics of the three guṇas—sattva, rajas, and tamas.
[7] Tejas. [8] Tattvas. [9] Literally, make to shine.

ings and Mantra are identical is a false and mistaken idea. In order to guard ourselves against it, we must first understand the word-meaning of Mantra, and then proceed to deal with Mantra Shakti.[1] In the Gâyatrî Tantra it is said: "That is called Mantra by the meditation[2] upon which Jîva acquires freedom from sin, enjoyment of heaven, and liberation,[3] and by the aid of which he attains in full the fourfold fruit."[4] Again: "Because She is sung (gîta) in meditation from Mulâdhâra[5] to Brahmarandhra[6]—that is to say, She, enjoying the music of the lute,[7] ever resides as the Mother, consisting of the fifty letters in the regions which extend from the four-petalled to the thousand-petalled lotus[8]—therefore is She *gâyat*;[9] and because, if meditated upon, She gives liberation (trâṇa) to Jîva by the piercing of the sheath of the Shatchakra,[10] therefore is She *tri*. By the combination of *gâyat* and *trî* is formed the word Gâyatrî, which is the name of that great Shakti who consists of Mantra."

In another Tantra it has been said: "Mantra is so called because it is achieved by a mental process. Dhyâna is meditation. In Samâdhi[11] the self merges with the Self of the Ishtadevata,[12] and Homa is so called because in it offerings are made."

The nature of mind and its faculties is thus explained in Shâstra:[13] "Mind is the master of the ten senses, and is situate in the centre of the lotus of the heart. It is also called antahkaraṇa,[14] because, without the senses, it has no power of action as regards external things—that

[1] Power of Mantra. [2] Manana. [3] Moksha.
[4] That is, dharma, artha, kâma, moksha.
[5] The lowest Chakra in the perinæal region.
[6] The cavity of Brahman on the crown of the head. [7] Vîṇâ.
[8] That is, from the Mulâdhâra padma to the Sahasrâra padma.
[9] "Sung."
[10] That is, the process called Shatchakrabheda by which the roused Kuṇḍalinî pierces and ascends the six Chakras until She unites with the Shiva of the Sahasrâra. [11] Ecstasy.
[12] That is, the Deity which a particular person worships.
[13] The Panchadashî. [14] Literally, means "doing inside."

is, if the ear does not hear a sound, if the skin does not feel a touch, or if the eye does not see a form, if the tongue does not perceive a taste, or if the nose does not perceive a smell, mind becomes incapable of perceiving the nature of anything. The mastery of mind consists in this alone, that when the senses have been directed each on its own object, mind sits in judgment on them. Mind examines what is good and what is bad. Mind has three guṇas[1]—namely, sattva, rajas, and tamas. It is from these guṇas that all the different changing states[2] of mind arise. The guṇas being three, therefore, the three mental states are also threefold according as they are sâttvik, râjasik, and tâmasik. The sâttvik states are non-attachment to the world,[3] forgiveness, generosity, and the like. The râjasik states are passion, anger, greed, striving, and the like; and laziness, error, lethargy, and the like, are tâmasik states. Sâttvik states lead only to virtuous acts, râjasik only to sin, and tâmasik states give rise neither to sin nor virtue, but merely waste a life, which is spent to no purpose."

"Antahkaraṇa"[4] is fourfold—namely, manas, of which the function is doubt;[5] buddhi, of which the function is certainty;[6] and ahangkâra[7] and chitta,[8] of

[1] Qualities or principles (see Introduction). [2] Vikâra. [3] Vairâgya.

[4] The antahkaraṇa, which is the ego in general (Ahamartha antahkaraṇa sâmânyam—Yoga Vâshishṭha), is really one, though its functions are distinguished as above.

[5] Manas is that mental faculty which considers whether the subject presented to it is this or that—"doubt"—manah sankalpa vikalpakâtmakam (Sânkhya Tattva Kaumudi).

[6] After manas functions it presents its object to the self, which sets itself as subject against it. Then Buddhi, which is determination (Adyavasâya buddhi, ii., chap. xiii., Sutra Sângkhya Pravachana Darshanam), follows with its quality of certainty (Nishchayakariṇi).

[7] Self-consciousness—the ego recognizing itself (abhimâna ahangkâra, ii., chap. xvi., Sutra, *ibid.*).

[8] A term, in its wide signification meaning "mind" or the antahkaraṇa in general, but here meaning that which functions as chintâ, "contemplation" of a present or remembered object of thought. In Sângkhya, as opposed to Vedânta, Chintâ is included in Buddhi.

which the functions are egoism and remembrance[1] respectively.

The function of antahkaraṇa, consisting of doubt, is called "manas"; the function of antahkaraṇa, consisting of certainty, is called "buddhi"; the function of antahkaraṇa, consisting of self-consciousness, is called "ahangkâra"; and the function of antahkaraṇa, consisting of remembrance, is called "chitta." In the sphere of worship chitta occupies the first place. Remembrance of Mantra and Devatâ, contemplation on the meaning of Mantra, and meditation on Devatâ, and all such related matters, are accomplished by processes of the function of chitta. The meaning of aksha is sense. The taking cognizance by the senses of anything is called in the Ṣhâstra "pratyaksha."[2] A sense devoid of consciousness cannot perceive. The senses are but the doors through which the antahkaraṇa perceives all directly perceptible things. This is the reason why in dreamless sleep,[3] swoon, and delirium, the mind, being unable to function, even things close by are not perceived, despite the existence of the senses. When mind has perceived a thing through the gate of sense, the thought of that thing continues like the steady flow of a current in the antahkaraṇa, which is not possessed by anything else. But just as innumerable waves rise and fall during the rainy seasons upon the heaving bosom of a river, so various operations of the mind, working upon the innumerable things of the outside world, come and go in the antahkaraṇa of Jîva. In consequence, no particular function of the mind is stationary even for a moment. Some other appears and thrusts it aside. That process by which the antahkaraṇa endeavours to put aside a later and to recall an earlier operation is remembrance, or function of chitta. The next question is, What will chitta remember? How can chitta remember that which has not been registered by the senses and perceived by the mind? Unless a thing

1 Involved in all contemplation. 2 Direct perception. 3 Sushupti.

has once been perceived, its remembrance is not possible. Here it may be objected that persons in dreams perceive heaven, places of pilgrimage, and the effulgent forms of Devas and Devîs which they have never seen before. How can these things be reflected in the mind during dreams without having first been seen by the physical eye? This objection has no force, because all such things as are perceived in dreams are mental. During sleep all the senses become inactive, mind alone remaining conscious. In the dream-play mind is the only actor, so that, whatever is shown, the acts and scenes of that play are but the sport of that one actor assuming different characters. Lions, tigers, snakes, bears, wife, son, friend, and servant, heaven and hell, and all such things seen in dreams are nothing but transformations of the antahkaraṇa. Whatever the mind has at any time seen, heard, or thought, remains engraved thereon like marks on a stone. For various reasons, in sleep subsequent superimposed impressions disappear, laying former marks exposed to view. As the outer curtain is raised, the inner scene is revealed. It is not that heaven has never been perceived. All that we can say is that it has not been perceived in this birth. We have no right to say that it was not perceived in any previous birth. These matters[1] will, however, be explained in our discourse on reincarnation. This much only we shall say here, that mind is the builder[2] of the heaven seen in dream, when it perceives not by aid of the senses, but works only with the aid of such materials as were perceived by it before. It is with such materials that the mind builds in dream heaven, earth, hell, and all such things. Mind, then, without the aid of eye or ear, sports with such things as it has seen or heard by the eye or ear, but with this difference, that by bringing one thing in contact with some other previously perceived thing, it makes both appear in a form different from their real one. True, we

[1] Tattvas. [2] Viṣhvakarmâ.

see heaven in dreams, but the idea that that heaven is heaven is but a reflection of the heaven which the ear has perceived through Vedas and Vedângas. Had we not heard the beauty of heaven described by Itihâsas,[1] Purâṇas, and the like, and impressed that heaven in our minds, the idea of heaven would never have been found within us, and without such idea we should never have seen heaven in dream. It is the previous impressions caused by our having heard of heaven which makes us see heaven in the dream picture. In this lies the distinctive character of the picture. The palaces. temples, woods, and groves which we see in it are but reflections of things which we have seen on earth, with this difference, that through its previous impressions the mind decks them out in various ways. In the case of a shining city seen in dream the brilliance as well as the city are of previous perception. Mind only puts the brilliance and the city together. Dense forests full of animals of prey have always existed, but to-day mind places me before a tiger in such a forest. In this alone is to be seen the handiwork of mind, the hidden mystery of the drama, the characteristic of the dream. It is for this reason that I have said that a thing which has not been perceived by one of the five senses can never be seen in dream, for mind, the showman, does not contain it in his store-house. Dreams relating to Devatâs worshipped by Sâdhakas are, however, brought about by a different process, which we shall explain in the chapter on the eight forms of Siddhi of a Sâdhaka.

This instance of dream proves that, whether in waking or sleep, chitta cannot remember anything which has not been heard, touched, seen. tasted, or smelt.

Even in the case of meditation upon a Mantra some one or other of these five sense-principles must be present. In the case of the Gâyatrî there is much difficulty on this point.

[1] Histories.

Worship of Gâyatrî.

Many people nowadays believe that it is the Brahman without attribute who is the Devatâ of the Gâyatrî, so that with the Gâyatrî Mantra only his attributeless aspect should be contemplated. But in this there is a difficulty. The attributeless Brahman is beyond the range of the mind, speech, or senses, and how can mind think or chitta remember that which is not within the range of the senses. If it is impossible even in dream to see anything which has not been previously perceived by the senses, how is it possible to do so when awake? The contemplation of the Gâyatrî Mantra is thus rendered impossible. Secondly, the attributeless Brahman is beyond all attributes. That which is such shows neither favour nor disfavour, neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction, so that nothing should be desired or expected from it in this Sangsâra. And what is the use of going to that from which nothing can be obtained, of which nothing can be expected, and to whom nothing is near, and nothing is distant?

It may be said that Gâyatrî does not ask anyone to go or come, but only to sit down and meditate. But meditation is not possible without mind. The latter is intimately associated with the three qualities. The supreme Brahman is without them. It is, therefore, as impossible to hold the firmament between a pair of tongs as it is to worship the attributeless Brahman by a mind with attributes. Thirdly, whether we be on the paths of knowledge,[1] devotion,[2] or work,[3] worship of the Brahman without attribute is against all opinions, reason, and Ṣhâstra. "The mental process by which the self is related to the Brahman with attributes is called worship." For this reason it would have been preferable that anything else than worship should be done in relation to the attributeless Brahman, which it is supposed the Gâyatrî

[1] Jnâna. [2] Bhakti. [3] Karma.

seeks to establish. But how can we help it? The Ṣhâstra has, again, said: "The twice-born—that is, Brâhmaṇas, Kshatriyas, and Vaiṣhyas—are all Ṣhâktas,[1] and not Ṣhaivas or Vaishṇavas; for they all worship Gâyatrî Devî, the Mother of the Vedas." This means that, whatever one may become afterwards, whether Ṣhaiva, Vaishṇava, Saura,[2] or Gâṇapatya,[3] one is at base a Ṣhâkta.

For Gâyatrî, who is the Mother of the Vedas, and from whom a person derives his twice-born character, is Herself an embodiment of mighty Ṣhakti.

Here also it has been said: "All worship Gâyatrî Devî." How can one who is attributeless be made the subject of a mind with attributes? Fourthly, it is said that the Brahman which Gâyatrî seeks to establish is attributeless. Ṣhâstra, however, says that, when meditating on Gâyatrî during japa,[4] She should be contemplated under three forms according as it is morning, noon, or evening. In the morning She is Gâyatrî, and appears as a young girl, rosy like the young sun. She is two-armed Brâhmaṇî,[5] riding a swan,[6] holding in her hand rudrâksha beads,[7] the thread, and begging-bowl,[8] residing in the disc of the sun, the presiding Devî[9] of the Rigveda. At noon She is Sâvitrî, and appears as a young woman, dark as the petals of a blue lotus. She is Vaishṇavî,[10] riding the bird Garuḍa, holding in Her four arms a conch shell,[11] discus,[12] mace,[13] and a lotus, residing in the orb of the sun, the presiding Devî of the Yajurveda. In the evening She is

[1] Worshippers of the Devî, as opposed to worshippers of Ṣhiva and Vishṇu. [2] Worshipper of the sun. [3] Worshipper of Gaṇeṣha.

[4] That is, Dhyâna, during recitation (japa) of mantra, as the Catholic, when saying the rosary, thinks of each scene of the joyful, sorrowful, or glorious mysteries.

[5] Feminine aspect or Ṣhakti of Brahmâ.

[6] Hangsa, which is also described as a goose or flamingo, the vehicle (Vâhana) of Brahmâ.

[7] The seed of a fruit, used for mâlâ (rosary), etc.

[8] Kamaṇḍalu, used by ascetics to carry food given to them.

[9] Adhishṭhatrî.

[10] Feminine aspect or ṣhakti of Vishṇu, whose Vâhana is the Bird-King Garuḍa.

[11] Shangkha.

[12] Chakra.

[13] Gadâ, all three held by Vishṇu.

Sarasvatî, and appears as an older woman of spotless white beauty. She is three-eyed Rûdrâṇî,[1] crowned with the crescent moon, riding a bull, holding a trident[2] and drum,[3] residing in the solar disc, the presiding Devî of the Sâmaveda.

In the commentary of Ṣangkarâchâryya on Sandhyâ,[4] as prescribed in the Yajurveda, the following passages are quoted : " Gâyatrî at morn, Sâvitrî at noon, Sarasvatî at eventide. She bears these three names at these three times of the day, and She herself is Sandhyâ at all three times (Vyâsa).

" The morning Sandhyâ is Gâyatrî, the noon Sandhyâ is Sâvitrî, and the evening Sandhyâ is Sarasvatî " (Yajnavalkya).

" Gâyatrî is red, Sâvitrî is white (according to some[5] Veda), and Sarasvatî is dark (according to some[5] Veda). These three appearances of Gâyatrî have been mentioned for the three Sandhyâs. In meditation at other times She should be contemplated upon as being of a white colour " (Vyâsa).

" Three-footed Gâyatrî who in Her three feet embodies the three Ṣhaktis[6] of Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara ; Her alone should the twice-born seek and worship in three forms."

Again, it has been ordained that this very Gâyatrî, who appears as Ṣhakti, should be contemplated as a male at the time of prâṇâyâma[7] thus :

" At the time of inspiration[8] of breath contemplate (according to some[5] Veda) the Mahâtmâ[9] dark as the petals of a blue lotus, with four arms in the circle of the navel. At the time of retention of breath[10] contemplate (accord-

[1] Feminine aspect or ṣhakti of Rûdra (Ṣhiva), whose Vâhana is a bull.
[2] Triṣhûla.
[3] Damaru, a small " hour-glass " drum, held as well as the trident by Ṣhiva.
[4] Daily worship, performed at morning, noon, and eventide.
[5] *Sic* in original.
[6] Powers.
[7] Regulation of breath, or breath exercises (see Introduction).
[8] Pûraka.
[9] Great Spirit ; here Vishṇu.
[10] Kumbhaka.

ing to some[1] Veda) Brahmâ, the grandfather of the world,[2] red of body, with four mouths seated on a lotus in the region of the heart. At expiration[3] of breath contemplate Maheṣhvara,[4] the Destroyer of sin, clear, fair, and white, like the purest crystal in the region of the forehead."

Oh, thou Brâhmaṇa, who hast privilege[5] in Veda and worshippest Gâyatrî, tell me now, do these forms represent that aspect of the Brahman which is without attributes?

Whether the Brahman be with or without attribute, and possessed of form or not, will be hereafter discussed. Ṣhâstra says that the Brahman whom the Gâyatrî speaks of is without attribute, but it also says that at time of japa and prâṇâyâma His form with attributes should be contemplated. How are we to harmonize these two statements of Ṣhâstra? If in Gâyatrî He is explained to be without attribute, why does Ṣhâstra again enjoin that He should be contemplated with attributes? How shall we establish a concordance between these apparently conflicting statements? We shall deal with this matter afterwards. But here we ask why has this conflict come about? Has Ṣhâstra itself the power to determine anything in Him?[6] Of course not. Is it not bound to say that which He really is? Had the Ṣhâstra been the creation of mere human authorship then there would certainly have been much ground both for affirmance and denial. But according to the Âryyan view Ṣhâstra is not a human production, but the production of Him concerning whom these questions arise. How then can objection arise as to why the Ṣhâstra has said this or that? Bhagavân Himself takes his own portraits in His own camera. These portraits reproduce the different appearances in which He is sitting before it. His will is the sole cause of these differences. For this reason an objection as to why Ṣhâstra has said this or that is fundamentally impossible.

1 *Sic* in original. 2 Loka. 3 Rechaka. 4 Ṣhiva.

5 Literally, "enjoyest adhikâra in Veda."

6 Literally, "to build or break anything about Him."

The Vâchya[1] and Vâchaka[1] Ṣhaktis of a Mantra.

Sâdhakas will particularly bear in mind that not only in the Gâyatrî but in every Mantra there are two Ṣhaktis—the Vâchya Ṣhakti and the Vâchaka Ṣhakti. The Devatâ who is the subject of a Mantra,[2] is the Vâchya Ṣhakti, and the Devatâ who is the Mantra itself[3] is Vâchaka Ṣhakti. For instance, the Devatâ presiding[4] over all Vishṇu Mantras is Durgâ in the Mantra of the hymn of one thousand names of Durgâ. Durgâ is the Devatâ and Mahâmâyâ is the Ṣhakti. In the hymn of a thousand names of Vishṇu, Paramâtmâ Ṣhrîkṛishṇa is the Devatâ, and the son of Devakî[5] is the Ṣhakti, and so on. As the seed lies inside the fruit so the Vâchya Ṣhakti lies within the Vâchaka Ṣhakti. As one cannot see the seed without penetrating through the fruit, so one cannot perceive the true nature of the Vâchya Ṣhakti without first worshipping the Vâchaka Ṣhakti. It is the Vâchya Ṣhakti who is the life of a Mantra, and the Vâchaka Ṣhakti is that by which such life is sustained. Without life what is there to sustain? And if it be not sustained life is not possible. For this reason, without both of these two Ṣhaktis a Mantra cannot even be awakened,[6] and Siddhi cannot be obtained in it.[7] In particular, without worship of the Vâchaka Ṣhakti life cannot be infused into a Mantra.[8] To think of Sâdhana and Siddhi in connection with an unconscious Mantra is as though one were

[1] These terms are explained in the text.

[2] Pratipâdya Devatâ.

[3] Mantramayî Devatâ.

[4] Adhishṭhatri residing in or presiding over. Every mantra has its Adhisṭhatri Devatâ.

[5] Mother of Kṛishṇa.

[6] That is, there is no mantrachaitanya. Unless the mantra is awakened in and by the consciousness of the sâdhaka the mantra thus becoming parcel of and the consciousness of the sâdhaka himself, it is mere dead sound and letter and without fruit.

[7] Mantrasiddhi (see Introduction).

[8] The conditioned consciousness necessarily works by and through form (which is the nature of its thinking) to the formless "That" which manifests to the sâdhaka in worship as form.

to take a dead child in one's lap, and thought to attain worldly prosperity with its help. By worship[1] the Sâdhaka must here understand not the worship of the twentieth century spreading like some contagious disease, but the worship ordained by Shâstra for the Âryyan race. For the fruit of this worship, to which we shall refer, is stated in the Shâstra. The Mantra of this worship is not prayer or self-dedication, ending in roaring thunder and storm-clouds in an autumnal sky.[2] The first fruit of its utterance is a shower of glances from Devas powerful enough to deluge the universe, and the last is the wealth of Siddhi. As the waters of earth drawn by the sun gather in the sky, and then fall on the earth as rain and are dried up, and again and again are drawn by the sun, and fall and are dried up, so is this dualistic world drawn towards the brilliant solar orb which is the subject of the Gâyatrî, and then descends as knowledge of the non-dualistic truth,[3] flooding the dry dualistic sangsâra, making a current of non-dualistic Brahma-knowledge and Brahma-bliss to flow all over the dualistic universe, setting aside illusive dualism, drawing non-dualistic knowledge towards Her from whom dualistic existence originates. And in the meantime the wealth of the eight Siddhis[4] grows and ripens, filling the vast universe, the field of action[5] belonging to that worthy cultivator the Sâdhaka. For this reason we are not to understand by the Gâyatrî Mantra the beginning of a storm, but the Mother, who is fair as clouds laden with water. The attributeless Vâchya Shakti, who is the subject of the Gâyatrî, knows that Her aspect without attribute is unapproachable by Jîvas who have attributes. She has therefore blessed the world of devotees by the assumption of form with attributes favourable to the Sâdhana and Siddhi of the Sâdhaka, and it is this form dwelling in the hearts of

[1] Upâsanâ.
[2] That is, in moaning, weeping, etc.
[3] Tattva.
[4] See Introduction.
[5] Karma.

devotees which is the Vâchaka Ṣhakti resident in the Gâyatrî Mantra. It is the lustre of Her colours, white, yellow, blue, and red, which manifests itself in the lustre of Kulakuṇḍalinî,[1] voicing the fifty letters of the Alphabet. It is of Herself that every letter speaks. Ṣhâstra therefore says: "Oh, Muni, who can relate the unparalleled greatness of that Âdyâ Ṣhakti?[2] Ṣhiva Himself, with his five mouths, has failed to describe it. When death approaches the dweller at Benares who longs for liberation, to him Ṣhambhu[3] Himself appears, and utters in His ear the great Mantra called Târaka-Brahma in the form in which it was given by his Guru, and thus grants him the supreme liberation of Nirvâṇa. Oh, Jaimini Brâhmaṇa and Ṛishi! it is that great Ṣhakti who gives the liberation of Nirvâṇa, for She alone is the vîja[4] of all Mantras. Oh, high-souled man, all Vedas have described that Guru of liberation as the Devatâ who resides in all Mantras. In the city of Benares, Maheṣhvara, desirous of granting liberation to all creatures, even to such as hares, insects, and the like, who have received no initiation, Himself utters in their ears at the time of death the name Durgâ, the great Târaka-Brahma Mantra."[5]

Again, in the chapter on Creation in the same Ṣhâstra, it has been said: "High-souled man! in this manner Bhagavân Brahmâ created the whole world, and Prakṛiti Devî, appearing through part of Herself as Sâvitrî, whom the twice-born worship at three sandhyâs,[6] received Him as Her husband. Similarly the Devî incarnated Herself in part as Lakshmî and Sarasvatî, and in Her play received Vishṇu, the maintainer of the three worlds, as Her husband."

Over and above this there are descriptions of Her innumerable manifestations[7] in the form of the Mâtrikâ

[1] The Devî whose seat is in the Mulâdhâra. [2] Primal Ṣhakti.
[3] Ṣhiva. [4] Seed or seed mantra.
[5] Mahâbhâgavata Discourse between Vyâsa and Jaimini.
[6] Morning, noon, and evening. [7] Vibhûti.

varṇas.[1] To these aspects we shall refer in their proper place. In fact, there is no difference in substance between the different states, Vâchya and Vâchaka, of Sachchidânandamayî.[2] As clouds are the compact state of water, so the aspect with attributes of the Vâchaka Ṣhakti is but the compact state of the attributeless Vâchya Ṣhakti. As clouds moved by the mind liquefy and pour rain, so, moved by the love of devotees, the Deva with form and attributes gratifies them by manifesting to their view that aspect of Hers without attributes which pervades the universe. Sâdhana and Siddhi are the necessary processes to secure such gratification. For this reason we find in Ṣhâstra that whenever She has out of Her extreme favour to a devotee fully manifested Herself, She has, despite of Her being formless, shown the world-form[3] as Her own form. Had the Vâchaka Ṣhakti been separate from the Vâchya Ṣhakti, how were it possible for the unlimited Ṣhakti extending throughout the universe to appear in that limited form ? How could the womb of a limited form hold this universe ? And so, oh, devotee, I say the cloud is but a condensed mass of particles of water. Open your heart, cry "Oh, Mother!" fan it with the wind of devotion,[4] and then you will see that a copious incessant downpour will deluge the three worlds. And then, not only ourselves, but the whole dualistic world will enter and sink in the unfathomable womb of the one and only existence.[5] When the Ṣhakti with attributes resident in the Mantra is, by dint of the Sâdhana of the Sâdhaka, awakened, She will open the gate of the monistic truth, when it will become possible to see the true nature and essence[5] of this universe. Just as in order to obtain a knowledge of the magic art of acting the actors and actresses must themselves play their parts,

[1] Letters of the alphabets.
[2] She whose substance is existence, consciousness, and bliss: the definition of the Brahman.
[3] Viṣhvarûpa. [4] Bhakti. [5] Tattva.

so unless the Actor and Actress in the play of this world themselves graciously show us their art, none can give a true perception of what is Brahmavidyâ.[1] But the matter is different for those who, appearing themselves in the character of actors and actresses, make a play of that play, who in reading dramas themselves become the dramatis personæ, and who the moment they close their eyes cause the universe with attributes to vanish, and see the attributeless Brahman.[2] For they are themselves both exhibitors and spectators, both actors and audience. They can change their character ten times in an hour, and themselves enjoy the sight of it. They can do what they like. We have nothing to say to it. Nevertheless, whatever others may say, they themselves know that they are not one whit better than what they were before, but have merely assumed a part. So much about the playing of parts; the seeing of the real play is a different matter. But the thirst of the heart of those who hope that He will play, and they will see; that He will dance, and they will be the cause of His dancing; that He will show His real aspect and they will enjoy it to their hearts' content, cannot be satisfied by the sight of this worthless play. Their solemn resolve is that so long as new and charming clouds do not appear in the sky, they would rather cry with plaintive hearts and parched throats incessantly, like a châtaka,[3] in this life, tormented by the three kinds of sorrow,[4] than, being drawn by the false attraction of the mirage, rush towards it like foolish deer, and be untimely consumed with the fire of a burning thirst. Sooner or later a day must come in the year of human life when the eye will be soothed and the heart refreshed by the blissful world-filling beauty of the soothing shining

[1] Knowledge of Brahman.

[2] A remark directed against the Brahmo sect, who are here described as thinking that they can do without Sâdhana, and by simply closing their eyes can see the Nirguna Brahman.

[3] A bird which is said to live only on rain. [4] *Vide ante*, p. 50.

cloud, and the thirst of the heart will be satiated for life by the shower of Her gracious glances full of nectar. For this reason the devotee depends on Her alone, is all submission to Her, never begs at the door of others, and says: "Oh, Mother, I know that Thy true aspect is Brahmakaivalya,[1] that Thou art without attribute, and attainable by true knowledge alone. I know that Thou art also full of kindness for Thy devotee. I know that Thou art our Lady,[2] and that the universe is Thy form. I know that Thy substance is existence, consciousness, and bliss, and that Thou in various forms grantest the desires of Sâdhakas. I know that Thou holdest the three worlds in play. I know, oh, Mother, that Thou art the ordainer of all ordainers. But still I know that for the man who is helpless, destitute, and woebegone, who seeks a shelter from danger, and who has no means of fulfilling his desire, Thou art the sole amulet, Mantra, and healing balm. It is in order that She may grant this prayer of the Sâdhaka and to prove the truth of this faith that She who is the Vâchya Ṣhakti, whose substance is eternal consciousness, assumes playful forms as Vâchaka Ṣhakti. Dwelling as Daughter in such a form the Mother of the world said to Her Father, Himâlaya: 'None can comprehend my subtle[3] form without first having duly meditated[4] on my gross[5] form. The sight of this subtle form releases Jîva from the bonds of Sangsâra, and gives him Nirvâṇa Samâdhi.[6] For this reason a Sâdhaka who desires liberation must first seek refuge in my gross forms, and then, having by Kriyâyoga duly worshipped these forms slowly and step by step, think of My supreme, unwasting, subtle form.'"

The Sâdhaka will from this realize that it is only after full worship of Her in Her aspects with form

[1] The supreme liberation.
[2] Îṣhvarî, feminine of Îṣhvara, the "personal" Deity.
[3] Sûkshma.
[4] Dhyâna.
[5] Sthûla
[6] Ecstasy of liberation.

that he has the right to think, little by little, of Her subtle aspect. Now where is that subtle aspect, and where stand you and I ?

As in Gâyatrî, so in every Mantra, the Vâchya Ṣhakti is without attribute, and the Vâchaka Ṣhakti is with attribute, for the latter is the object of worship and the former the object which is to be attained. The Vâchaka Ṣhakti must be used as a means and support in order that the Vâchya Ṣhakti may be attained.

So long as I must worship with this, my mind and heart preserving the distinction that I am the worshipper and She is the worshipped, so long there is no other alternative than to worship that aspect of Her which has both form and attributes. But on the day that my mind and heart sink in the womb of Prakṛiti[1] the twenty-four tattvas[2] will disappear in Herself, all egoism will be destroyed, and I shall lose myself in that state beyond all speech and thought, in which " neither you nor I exist." On that day where am I or who is mine ? Your existence depends on mine, so that if I cease to exist where, then, are you ? And even if " you " do exist there will be no " I " to discover " you." Only so long as a river does not fall and lose itself in the sea does the distinction between river and sea exist. But when the river mingles with the sea the former ceases to exist ; and so does the sea to the river, which is lost in it, though it exists for all the world besides. The individuality of the river ceasing to exist, it can no longer say what it has become owing to the loss of its self. There is then no means of either separating the " self " of the river, nor can the river separate itself. For this reason I say that when I cease to exist She, too, notwithstanding Her existence, ceases to exist so far as I am concerned, for with the destruction of my individuality Her individuality in its

[1] See Introduction.

[2] Of Sângkhya—viz., Prakṛiti, Mahat, Ahangkâra, Manas, Indriyas, Tanmâtras, Mahâbhutas.

relationship to me has also been destroyed. Now tell me, O Sâdhaka ! whom shall you worship when sinking in the attributeless aspect of the Self. This state is not worship, but the ultimate fruit of it called Nirvâṇa or Brahmakaivalya. In this state the worshipper becomes one with the worshipped. There remains neither worshipper nor worshipped, but only She. If you consider this as also suitable for worship, I know not where in the domain of the Lady with dishevelled hair[1] you can get liberation. However that may be, the question is one which concerns only those who have attained that state. We say to you, Jîva, that so long as that state of a Jîva lasts, no other means are available to you but worship. So long as you must worship you must, in order to maintain that worship as such, continue to worship a Deity which possesses form. Do not be afraid. Neither you nor I will have to clutch indiscriminately at anything or everything.

She who created Jîva knew aforehand the pangs of the Jîva's heart, and because She must be attained the Daughter of the Mountain has surrendered Herself to various forms. Because of this we on earth may dare to stretch our hands towards heaven to seize Her. Although, whether on earth, in heaven, or in the nether world, She is one without a second, She has yet assumed various forms as Mother of the dualistic world. It is the sight of this grand play of Brahmamayî which has led Ṣhâstra to say in the Kulârṇava Tantra :[2]

" Brahman, who is all consciousness, without body or part, and beyond the power of speech and mind, builds forms for Himself for the benefit of Sâdhakas."

In the Mahânirvâṇa Tantra, Sadâṣhiva says to the Devî : " Hear why Thou art worshipped, and why Thy Sâdhana leads Jîva to Brahma-Sâyujya[3] ? Thou art the supreme Prakṛiti of the Supreme Soul. O Ṣhivâ ![4] the

1 Devî as Kâlî and other appearances (Murti) is so represented.
2 Chap. vi. 3 Union with Brahman (see Introduction and *ante*).
4 The Devî.

whole world is born of Thee. Hence Thou art its Mother. O Lady ! everything in this world, be it great or small, moving or unmoving, has been created by Thee, and exists under Thy control. Thou art the Mulaprakṛiti[1] of all Vidyâs,[2] and the origin of even Us[3] ; Thou knowest the Tattva[4] of the entire universe, yet none know Thy true aspect. Thou art Kâlî, Târâ, Durgâ, Shoḍaṣhî, Bhuvaneṣhvarî, and Dhûmâvatî. Thou art Bagalâ, Bhairavî, and Chinnamastâ. Thou art Annapûrṇâ[5] and the Devî of speech.[6] Thou art Mahâlakshmî, who dwells in a lotus. Thou dost embody all Ṣhaktis. In Thee are all Devas. Thou art subtle as well as gross, manifested as well as unmanifested. Formless, Thou dost possess also forms. Who can know Thy true aspect ? For the success of worshippers, the welfare of the whole world, and the destruction of the Dânavas,[7] Thou assumeth all kinds of bodies. Thou art four-armed, two-armed, six-armed, and eight-armed. For the preservation of the universe Thou holdeth all kinds of arms and weapons. Mantra, Yantra,[8] and other modes of Sâdhana, as well as the three forms of worship, Paṣhu, Vîra, and Divya,[9] are all described in Tantra in accordance with these different aspects of Thine." The same Tantra says : " Thou dost embody all Ṣhaktis ; Thou art the supreme Âdyâṣhakti.[10] Our Ṣhaktis[11] as Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the universe, are derived from Thy Ṣhakti. Thy eternal forms are of varied colour and shape, and adored by means of various forms of Sâdhana. Who can describe all these ? It is by the grace of a drop of Thy mercy that it has been given to Me to describe in Kulatantra Âgama

[1] The root or primal Prakṛiti. [2] Ṣhaktis.
[3] That is, Brahmâ, Vishṇu, Ṣhiva, and other Devas.
[4] Truth, Principle, Nature, Essence.
[5] Various forms of the Devî, including the Daṣhamahâvidyâ.
[6] Sarasvatî.
[7] Demons. [8] The worshipped diagram (see Introduction).
[9] The three Bhâvas (see Introduction). [10] Primal Ṣhakti.
[11] That is, the powers of Brahmâ and others.

and other Ṣhâstras the mode of Sâdhana and worship of those forms of Thine."

From these Shâstrik references it appears that the Daughter of the Mountain, knowing the incapacity of Jîva to conceive any idea of Her subtle nature,[1] incarnated Herself in various forms for Sâdhana and Siddhi, the welfare of the three worlds, and for the relief of earth from the burden of its sins.[2] This is the firm faith of those who proceed along the path of Sâdhana under the control and protection of Ṣhâstra. Different is the opinion of those who hurry along the path of selfishness, keeping Ṣhâstra under their control. None can object to another preaching his own individual opinions. But those who hide themselves under the cloak of Ṣhâstra, and in an unnatural way kill or wound it, stabbing its heart with wrong meanings and perverted interpretations, pouring into it the poison of selfishness, proclaiming to the world that they are doctoring the Ṣhâstra from the poisonous bag, full of sharp weapons of selfishness belonging to modern social reformers, founders of religion, critics, and murdering charlatans, must be exposed in order to show with what excellent remedies they trumpet their doctoring of the religious world. We must also see whether the very wasted, contracted, and slumbering state of religion which they have brought about in the present time by virtue of their treatment is merely a sleep of rest for religion, or its eternal sleep in death. In this section we shall disclose to Sâdhakas that new treatment of Sâdhanadharma by these doctors, which consists of hitting its head with the Brahma-weapon :[3]

Chinmayasyâprameyasya nishkalasyâsharîrinah.
Sâdhakânâm hitârthâya brahmaṇo rûpakalpanâ.

That is to say, Brahman who is all consciousness, without body or parts and beyond the reach of

[1] Tattva: existence or reality.
[2] Bhûbhâra.
[3] A pun: the Brahma-weapon is a very dangerous one. Here it refers to the modern eclectic sect, called the Brâhma Samâj.

speech and mind,[1] builds forms for the benefit of Sâdhakas.

We have given before the interpretation of this verse, based on the authority of Ṣhâstra. But the above-mentioned doctors are opposed to this interpretation. They say that worshippers have themselves given imaginary forms to Brahman for their own purposes, although, as a matter of fact, Brahman has no form. If this be true, then Sâdhakas have not only given imaginary forms to Brahman, but their alleged purposes and benefit must be imaginary. If Brahman has really no form, how can we believe that a true purpose can be served by attributing false and imaginary forms to Him ? You may say that contemplation of form merely produces concentration of mind, and that, by His grace, gives siddhi. Here we ask, Does it not make one feel inclined to laugh when one thinks of something as existing which one knows to be non-existing ? It is neither contemplation nor concentration, but the play of a child with Brahman. A girl knows well enough that a doll can never be a living thing. She is not also ignorant of the fact that she is a little unmarried maiden. Still when she plays she shows great concern for her doll-son, pretends that it is crying, feigns to give it milk, takes it on her lap, caresses it, and so satisfies her own mind. The attribution of false forms to Brahman is exactly similar. I know that the attributeless Brahman has no pleasure, displeasure, virtue, vice, attraction, attachment, pity, generosity, no love, affection, dual relation, or even body. Is it not then absolutely useless for me to meditate upon imaginary forms of that attributeless, reposeful Brahman who has no form, and to worship Him to gain His favour ? Who will deny that they are madmen who believe that during the eternal flow of worldly events from time immemorial Âryyan worshippers have been simply wasting their energies in such a useless task ?

Secondly, if forms are imagined in order with their help

[1] Aprameya.

to acquire concentration of mind, why abandon such forms as are naturally beautiful and calculated at the very first glance to captivate the mind ; and why make the restless mind still more restless by the imagination of all kinds of unnatural and various forms for Devas and Devîs ? There is no objection to such an argument in the case of those who have imagined such unnatural forms. But such an idea is dangerous to those whose success depends on the dictates of Ṣhâstra. Whilst worshipping, I am independent, but at the time of receiving the fruits of worship I am dependent on Ṣhâstra ! It is very difficult to enter into this monstrous mystery.

Does Siddhi obey my command ? Is it not the height of impudence or the raving of a madman to suppose that Siddhi will appear and move in the way I shall order it, and follow upon whatever form I shall contemplate ? Knowing that this vanity of free thought in Ṣhâstra must one day be shattered, Bhagavân, in the discourse between Shrī Bhagavân and Uddhava in the Ṣhrîmad-bhâgavata,[1] says :

" The Sâdhaka who disobeys Ṣhâstrik ordinances and does sâdhana according to his will, not only fails to achieve siddhi, but also goes to Hell." His licence deprives him of siddhi, and the great sin of disobedience to Ṣhâstra leads him to Hell.

Will you and I to-day give imaginary forms to Him whose will has created the infinite form of the Brahmâṇḍa ? It is, indeed, creditable to you that you, being a man, have been able to believe it. I ask, What is your authority for this imagination of forms ? You will reply that Ṣhâstra has said : " Sâdhakânâmhitârthâya, brahmaṇo rûpakalpanâ."[2] I find nothing to object to in what Ṣhâstra has said, but the danger lies in the manner in which it is understood.

[1] Chap. xii.

[2] *Vide ante* ; the proper translation is, " For the good of sâdhakas Brahman builds forms," but, as pointed out later, the author's opponents translate the sentence differently.

CHAPTER V

COMMANDS OF ṢHÂSTRA

SHÂSTRA, which sees Brahman as He really is, has said that Brahman Himself builds forms for Himself for the benefit of Sâdhakas. But you take the Ṣhâstra to mean that worshippers have given imaginary forms to Brahman. The word Sâdhakânâm is formed by adding the sixth case-ending to the word Sâdhaka. This sixth case, according to you, indicates the nominative, and you take the word Rûpakalpanâ with Sâdhakânâm. Again, the word Brahmaṇah, which is formed by adding the sixth case-ending to the word Brahman, is supposed by you to have its sixth case in the genitive sense. You thus explain the whole thing as "forms have been imagined by Sâdhakas in relation to Brahman." But this is not its right explanation. It is the word Sâdhakânâm, which has its sixth case in the genitive sense, and should be read with the word hitârthâya. Again, the word Brahmaṇah has its sixth case in the nominative sense, and should be read with rûpakalpanâ. Thus the whole verse comes to mean "forms have been built by Brahman for the benefit of Sâdhakas." Although both sides may be equally liable to mistake, still the view which I have taken harmonizes with the context of the Ṣhâstrik saying. For the above verse appears in the Kulârṇava Tantra in connection with the worship of Devas possessing forms. First Devî says:

"I now desire to hear of the character of worship, so tell me the mode of worship in the purification of Kula articles, etc." In answer to this question Bhagavân

Ṣhiva, the Creator of all things, explains in the Chapter on Worship, the necessity or otherwise of invoking Devatâs, and establishes the fact of the possession of form to be the very foundation of invocation. It is in this connection that the verse appears whilst making provision for the worship of embodied Deities. To say that it is impossible that they should have aspects with form is not merely irrelevant, but disproves the very thing which it is sought to prove. This instance affords no opportunity for the service of selfish ends by giving a fallacious interpretation of the Sanskrit verse.

Secondly, there are ample grounds for the support of my view—namely, (1) If Sâdhakas give, according to their desire, imaginary forms to Brahman, why should the eternal Ṣhâstra accept such as evidence? (2) If Sâdhakas may create forms according to their own sweet will, it would be hard to guess the number which have been already created by innumerable Sâdhakas of different casts of mind, and the countless forms which will also in the future be created. Besides, if worship of all these forms gives siddhi, why has not Ṣhâstra separately provided in the case of each of them the mode of worship, consisting of Dhyâna[1] Mantra, etc.? (3) If I am independent in the matter of the imagination of forms, why should not also the mode of worship be guided by my own free-will? (4) If I imagine a form according to my own desire, what is there to oblige Îṣhvara to appear in that form? (5) If I can build forms, why cannot I build Mantras as well? (6) If Mantra Ṣhakti[2] is guided by my Ṣhakti, why, instead of expending it on Mantra, do I not worship in some other way? (7) Why should one accept a guru in respect of a worship which is to be performed by me according to my imagination? (8) What ṣhakti[3] is there in Jîva himself whereby he may obtain supersensual, superhuman siddhi without the help of Ṣhâstra? (9) When have I seen, or heard, or been convinced by argument

[1] Meditation. [2] Potency of mantra. [3] Power.

of such siddhi having been obtained by any person so that I may believe it? (10) Who will be responsible if in trying to obtain such siddhi I happen to fall? (11) Who knows in what time such siddhi may be attained? (12) If siddhi may be attained according to one's own desire, what is the necessity of worshipping Gâyatrî, whose substance is mantra, as said in Ṣhâstra?

These and other grounds are as favourable to my view as they are unfavourable to yours. How will you dare to say that Sâdhakas imagine forms without first answering fully these questions I have put against you?

When dealing with Her dhyâna, the Gâyatrî Tantra has said: "She has adopted playful bodies according to Her own desire." Again, in Bhagavadgîtâ,[1] Bhagavân Himself (whose form is in question here), has said:

"Though unborn, the imperishable Self, and also the Lord of all beings, brooding over Nature, which is Mine own, yet I am born through My own Power.

"Whenever there is decay of righteousness, O Bhârata! and there is exaltation of unrighteousness, then I Myself come forth.

"For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil doers, for the sake of firmly establishing righteousness I am born from age to age.

"Any devotee who seeketh to worship with faith any such aspect, I verily bestow the unswerving faith of that man."[2]

The Mârkaṇḍeya Purâṇa in Devîmâhâtmya[3] says: "Eternal is She whose appearance[4] is the universe which She pervades, yet hear from me of Her birth in various forms. Wherever She appears to do the work of Devas She is known in the three worlds to be born (although She is in reality free from birth and death)."

[1] Chap. iv., verses 6, 7, 8; and chap. vii., verse 21.

[2] For convenience, reference is made to a published translation. This and the other extracts from the Bhagavadgîtâ are from Mrs. Besant's translation, with the Sanskrit text.

[3] Chap. i.

[4] Murti.

The same book in the hymn in praise of the Devî says: "Mother, Thou hast by dividing Thyself into many forms, achieved the destruction of great Asuras,[1] the enemies of Dharma. By whom else can this be done?"

The following discourse between Himâlaya and Pârvatî appears in Bhagavatî Gîtâ in Mahâbhâgavata:

The Devî said: "O father, Lord of Mountains, of my own free-will have I divided My own form for the purpose of creation into the dual aspects of male and female. Of these, Ṣhiva is the supreme Purusha, and Ṣhivâ the supreme Ṣhakti.[2] Great King, Yogîs who discern the truth[3] speak of Me as Brahmatattva, with its two aspects of Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti.[4] As Brahmâ I create this universe of moving and non-moving things,[5] and as Mahârudra I, of My own will, destroy it at the time of dissolution.[6] High-souled Himâlaya, it is I, too, who, for the putting down of evil-doers, maintain as Vishṇu, the supreme Purusha, this entire created universe. High-souled Himâlaya, it is I, too, who, by repeated incarnations on earth as Râma and others, destroy Dânavas[7] and save this world. Father! of all these eternal and occasional forms of Mine, the greatest is that consisting of Ṣhakti, for it is certain that without Ṣhakti, the spirit in the form of Purusha has no power of action. Great King, know all such forms of Mine as have been above mentioned, as well as my forms as daughter and the like visible to you, to be My gross forms. I have already told you what My subtle form is. Great Mountain, none can apprehend My subtle form, the sight of which gives nirvâṇa kaivalya to Jîva without first meditating on My gross form. For this reason a Sâdhaka who desires liberation must first seek refuge with My gross forms, and after having fully and duly by kriyâyoga[8] worshipped these forms, slowly

[1] Demons.
[2] That is, the supreme "male" and "female" principles.
[3] Tattva. [4] See note 2. [5] That is, the organic and inorganic world.
[6] Pralaya. [7] Demons. [8] Yoga of action.

and little by little meditate on my unwasting, subtle, and supreme form."

Himâlaya then said: "Mother Maheṣhvarî, many are Thy gross forms. Which of these should Jîva seek refuge with in order easily to attain to liberation? As thou wouldst favour me, Mahâdevî, tell me this."

The Devî replied: "This universe consists of my gross forms. Of all these, the Devî form deserves the highest worship, and soon grants liberation. High-souled Himâlaya, that Devî form is also manifold. Of these, the Mahâvidyâs grant liberation speedily. Great King, hear their names from me: Mahâkâlî, Târâ, Shoḍaṣhî, Bhuvaneṣhvarî, Bhairavî, Bagalâ, Chhinnamastâ, Mahâtripurasundarî,[1] Dhûmâvatî, Mâtangî.[2] All these insure liberation. If Jîva will give his devotion to these forms liberation is of a certainty soon within his reach. Father, by means of Kriyâyoga seek the protection of any of these forms. Directing your mind towards Me alone you will of a surety possess Me. O Mountain, high-souled people who have found Me are never reborn. For them there is no birth in this life transient and full of sorrows. King! to the devoted yogî who ever remembers me with undistracted devotion I grant liberation. If one but once remember Me with devotion at the time of death he is nevermore overcome with the mass of worldly sorrows. High-souled man! to him who worships Me with devotion and singleness of heart I grant eternal liberation. Seek My protection in My aspect as Ṣhakti. It is that which surely procures liberation, and liberation will be attained by you. Great King! even those who worship other Devatâs with respect and devotion really worship Me alone, for I am in all and the giver of reward in every sacrifice. [That is, since I am in everything there is, leaving aside Devatâs, nothing in this world

[1] Kamalâ.

[2] The ten forms which the Devî assumed prior to Dakshayajna (see Introduction).

which, in a spiritual sense, is separate from me. And as to Devatâs, whoever of them may be worshipped, they are merely manifestations of My own greatness ; so that, whatever sacrifice may be performed, it is I who, in the form of the Devatâ worshipped therein, grant in return for such worship its reward.] But, great King! liberation can never be obtained by those who are devoted to these Devatâs alone [that is to say, who in their devotion to the Devatâs whom they worship are indifferent, disrespectful, or wanting in devotion to other Devatâs, considering the latter to be different from the former]. Therefore, with thy mind under control, seek shelter with Me for the loosening of the bonds of physical existence, and without a doubt you shall find Me."

In the Niruttara Tantra it has been said: "Devî, Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti are each divided according as they are with or without attribute. The supreme attributeless Brahmasanâtanî[1] is full of lustre, as is also the supreme attributeless Purusha,[2] who shines like a great blue jewel. But that attributeless shining Dakshiṇâkâlikâ[3] is far removed from all prapanchas[4] [that is to say, Her attributeless aspect, being imperceivable by physical beings formed by Mâyâ, lies at a great distance, for it is beyond the reach of Mâyâ, and therefore, so far as Jîva formed of Mâyâ is concerned, is situate beyond the sea of Mâyâ].

"In Her attributeless aspect that unbounded Sarasvatî is of unmeasurable power, and the mûlaprakṛiti of the fifteen phases of Ṣhakti, such as Kâlî, Kapâlinî, Kulvâ, and others. Again, in Her state with attributes, when She gives birth to the three Devas—Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara—in the great ocean of the original cause,[5] Her womb; it is She who gives birth to Mahâkâla, the first-born. It is She who, assuming a female form, gives birth to the entire universe, consisting of moving

[1] Ṣhakti. [2] Ṣhiva. [3] See note 1.

[4] Objects, consisting of the combination of the five tattvas: "earth," "water," "fire," "air," and "ether." [5] Kâraṇa.

and unmoving things. It is She who, as Vishṇumâyâ and Mahâlakshmî, has spread Her charm over this entire universe. That Âdyâshakti Dakshiṇâkâlî is Siddhavidyâ, and, as such, She is Mûlaprakṛiti and Purusha. Prakṛiti and Purusha are inseparably connected. One does not exist independent of the other. United with Ṣhakti, Purusha attains Ṣhivahood; and united with Ṣhiva, Prakṛiti attains Ṣhaktihood. It is the inseparable connection consisting of this union which is Parabrahmatattva. It is in this union that they should be contemplated. It is of this union that Ṣhiva Mantra consists. In dhyânayoga[1] alone should japa be made of this union. The Mantra consisting of this union of theirs is the Mahâmantra, and gives both enjoyment[2] and liberation.[3] He who desires enjoyment attains the four abodes, Sâlokya and others,[4] and he who desires liberation is absorbed in nirvâṇakaivalya. Kâlî, unbounded Sarasvatî, is the great desire-gratifying tree[5] of those who long for the fourfold fruit of dharma, artha, kamâ, moksha,[6] for She is the sole source of enjoyment and liberation even for Brahmâ, Vishṇu, Maheṣhvara. [That is to say, imperfect Jîvas alone, completely under the influence of Mâyâ, seek from such a tree that fruit which is according to their individual desire. But the peculiarity of this tree is that even those who are the guardians and controllers of Mâyâ, and who are perfect Îṣhvaras, have to depend upon it for their individual enjoyment and liberation.] A Sâdhaka should be initiated by his guru, and by virtue of his grace worship Kâlî, that great tree gratifying the desires of Mahâkâla, who embodies all Mantras and Tantras."

The following are Sadâṣhiva's words to Devî in the Mahânirvâṇa Tantra:[7] "Mahâkâla, the destroyer of the universe, is but another aspect of Thyself. At the time

[1] Yoga by meditation. [2] Bhoga. [3] Moksha.
[4] See Introduction. [5] Kalpataru. [6] See Introduction.
[7] Chap. iv.

of the great dissolution Kâla will swallow the entire universe. Because of this gathering unto death and destruction of all created things, He is called Mahâkâla and you Kâlî. The three worlds sing of Thee as the Primal One,[1] because at the time of giving birth Thou didst give birth to even Mahâkâla, the first Purusha ; and as Kâlî, because at the time of destruction Thou dost gather into Thyself even Mahâkâla, the Destroyer of all. Then Thou alone, in Thy formless aspect, unknowable and beyond speech and mind, dost exist. Thou art formless, though possessing form [that is to say, Thou art not bound to any particular form, as a Jîva is who possesses form], for by means of Mâyâ Thou dost assume innumerable forms according to Thy desire. Thou Thyself art without beginning, and yet art the beginning of all [that is to say, there is none prior to Thee]. It is Thou who createth, preserveth, and destroyeth the world."

On Formlessness and Form.

Sâdhaka, what do you understand from these statements of Ṣhâstra ? Are the forms of Brahman imagined by Sâdhakas or built by Himself ? What clearer evidence than this do you expect from Ṣhâstra ? This is why I said that there can be no objection to what Ṣhâstra has said. It is the fault of our intelligence which does all the mischief. Ṣhâstra has repeatedly said that He took forms according to His own desire. But you and I are ashamed of believing this, because on first entering school it dawned on us that " Îṣhvara is formless and consciousness itself." Every dawn has its setting, but in the " Dawn of sense "[2] there is neither dawning nor setting.

[1] Âdyâ.

[2] Bodhodaya, the title of a work for children by the late Paṇḍit Îṣhvara Chandra Vidyâsâgara. The following passages are a satirical play on the word Îṣhvara as denoting the Paṇḍit and also the name of God.

From beginning to end, in both purpose and effect, it is only full of accounts of Îṣhvara's own self. Many people are therefore troubled with the thought that Ṣhâstra is Îṣhvara's[1] word, and "the Dawn of Sense" is also Îṣhvara's[2] word, so they know not which to disregard at the risk of going to Hell. The Îṣhvara of the nineteenth century is truly an extraordinary and wonderful thing: for though, according to Ṣhâstra, Brahman[3] and Îṣhvara are in one sense one and the same, yet in another sense they are not so. Brahman is without, whilst Îṣhvara is with, attributes. Brahman is inactive, while Îṣhvara creates, preserves, and destroys. But in the various little religions[4] of the nineteenth century Brahman and Îṣhvara have come to mean one and the same thing. Such a golden cup of stone was never seen before.[5] This also, indeed, is part of Îṣhvara's sport! However that may be, He whom the Ṣhâstra names Îṣhvara can never be formless, for His function is aiṣhvarya, or lordship over the universe. He who has this self-consciousness of lordship cannot be without attribute, and it is impossible to be formless without being attributeless. Again, self-consciousness is a particular state of mind. He who has mind has surely body, and it is mere tautology to say that He whose body is eternally established possesses form. To call Îṣhvara the Lord of the universe, devoid of form, whether done under the authority of Ṣhâstra or reason, is as though one said that the ocean was devoid of water. An Îṣhvara with form is necessary for the creation of a universe with form. Had He been devoid of form, His creation also would have been devoid of it.

Such were our dawning ideas as the result of our training under a schoolmaster in boyhood. What we

[1] God. [2] The Paṇḍit.

[3] Brahman as the unknowable Supreme without attributes is contrasted with that aspect of It which manifests Itself in the work of creation, etc., and is adored as the "personal" God (Îṣhvara).

[4] Upadharma: as if one were to say not creeds but "creedlets."

[5] A Bengali saying for an impossibility.

have subsequently understood of ourselves, and which science is supposed to confirm, is that an Îṣhvara possessing body can never be omniscient ; for we suppose that, having a body, He must necessarily be bound by Mâyâ, and possessed of limited knowledge. Such being our inference, it would be wrong to hold that Yogîs and Ṛishis, who were free of the bonds of life, were unerring either ; for they, too, had bodies. Not to mention Îṣhvara, the powers of Yogîs, Ṛishis, Ṣâdhus, and Ṣâdhakas, derived from Siddhi are still daily visible. Even infidels cannot ignore this directly perceptible[1] truth. Believers as we are, how can you and I ignore it ? Is He, then, by whose worship even Jîvas with limited knowledge and under the influence of Mâyâ become free from the bonds of Mâyâ, and acquire omniscience—is He not omniscient also ? Is not this a point worthy of thought ? As when the door of a room is opened the air within it is united with the great spaces without, so by the opening of the doors of their minds composed of the three gunas the individual[2] and the supreme[3] principles unite, and are merged in the Self of the Parabrahman. Is He by whose grace they achieve this unable to keep Himself free of the influence of Mâyâ because of His having of His own free-will assumed form ?

Ṣhâstra[4] says : " How can He be subjected to bondage because of His having taken to Himself a body of his own free-will — He who gratifies by the enjoyment of the pollen of His lotus feet Munis who, by the force of Yoga, have thrown off the ties of all Karma,[5] and are no longer bound whatsoever they may do ?"

Bhagavân, then, in spite of His contact with Mâyâ due to the assumption of mayik forms, is free from the bondage of Mâyâ. This, of course, is a thing unattainable in the Jîvatattva.[6] But how can we help that ? He is Îṣhvara

1 Pratyaksha. 2 Jîvatattva. 3 Parabrahmatattva.
4 Chapter on Râsa in the Ṣhrîmadbhâgavata.
5 See Introduction. 6 World of embodied spirits.

for the very reason that such superhuman conditions are possible with Him. His Îṣhvarahood consists of this superhuman power. Ṣhâstra has therefore said: "Animâ, Laghimâ, Prâpti, Prâkâmya, Mahimâ, Îṣhitva, Vaṣhitva, and Kâmâvasâyitvâ—these are the eight Siddhis of Îṣhvara."[1]

The Ṣhrîmadbhâgavata, in the discourse between Bhagavân and Uddhava, says: "Animâ is minuteness so fine as to be imperceptible by the senses.[2] Mahimâ is greatness. Laghimâ is lightness. Prâpti is knowledge of all which the Jîvas perceives by His senses, due to the fact that Îṣhvara is the presiding Devatâ of the senses of all living creatures. Prâkâmya is the enjoyment of all things heard, seen, etc., Îṣhitva is the application of Ṣhakti or the spreading of the Ṣhakti of His own mâyâ over every Jîva in the universe. Vaṣhitva is freedom from the three guṇas of sattva, rajas, and tamas. Kâmâvasâyitva is the attainment of whatsoever I desire. Good man! these are My eight natural siddhis."

He is Îṣhvara or Îṣhvarî, Bhagavân or Bhagavatî, in whom these eight siddhis eternally exist. Now tell me, O Jîva, are these human powers? Without such powers He becomes a mere Jîva like you or me. If He becomes subject to mâyâ like you or me, what difference is there between Jîva and Îṣhvara?

Though eternally connected with mâyâ, mâyâ is yet subject to Him. Though full of mâyâ,[3] He is above it. It has therefore been said in the Vedânta doctrine:

"Prakṛiti, in which the Brahman, who is all consciousness[4] and bliss[5] is reflected, and which consists of the three gunas, sattva, rajas, and tamas, is twofold. Prakṛiti consisting of pure sattva guṇa is mâyâ, and prakṛiti consisting of impure[6] sattva guṇa is avidyâ. The image

[1] See p. 24, note 7, and following passage.
[2] That is, the power to make oneself as little, as big, as light, as heavy, etc., as one will.
[3] Mâyâmaya.
[4] Chit.
[5] Ânanda.
[6] That is, sattva and the other guṇas.

of consciousness reflected in mâyâ is called Îṣhvara. When reflected in avidyâ it is called Jîva. As mâyâ has but one aspect, so Îṣhvara, the reflection in it, has but one aspect.[1] Avidyâ, which consists of many guṇas, has many aspects, with the result that Jîva, the reflection in it, has also many aspects. The difference between Jîva and Îṣhvara is that while Îṣhvara rules mâyâ, Jîva is subject to it."

Both are connected with mâyâ, but whereas mâyâ is subject to Îṣhvara, Jîva is subject to mâyâ. This is the difference between Jîva and Îṣhvara. It is only because man cannot conceive the superhuman force of Îṣhvara's ṣhakti that he wonders how Îṣhvara can be almighty and omniscient if he possesses form. Foreseeing such an error, Bhagavân said to Arjuna :[2]

" The foolish disregard Me, when clad in human semblance, ignorant of My supreme nature, the great Lord of being."

In the Bhagavatîgîtâ[3] the Mother of the universe[4] gave the same instruction to Himâlaya :

" Similarly all other sâttvik, râjasik, and tâmasik dispositions which exist derive from me and exist in me under my control. But, Great Mountain! I am not under their control. Great King ! Jîvas, charmed by my mâyâ, fail to recognize this all-pervading supreme, unwasting, non-dualistic form of Mine. But, Father ! only those who with a single mind worship Me with devotion can cross this vast ocean of mâyâ and enter into that supreme form of Mine."

As we cannot directly see the beauty of the lunar orb unless the moon rays come in contact with the eye, so unless the mind and heart become intoxicated with the worship of Him, His true essence[5] cannot be perceived.

[1] Svarûpa—that is, that which it really is.
[2] Bhagavadgîtâ, chap. ix., verse 11.
[3] Part of the Devî Bhâgavata Purâṇa.
[4] Jagadambâ.
[5] Tattva.

For this reason, although Ṣhâstra gives a thousand and one instructions to persons who have not yet acquired a fitness to receive them, they are but as music to the ears of a deaf man.

The root objection nowadays is that as something without bounds cannot be contained in a receptacle with bounds, as unbounded space cannot be held in a limited room, as a lake which measures a yojana[1] cannot contain such a mass of water as can deluge the universe, so the limited body of Îṣhvara cannot possibly hold the ṣhakti[2] of Îṣhvara. But here let us say that while illustrations and comparisons may be of value and adornment in history and literature, yet illustrations taken from the things of this world have not always equal application to matters touching superworldly realities. It is the height of folly to proceed to discuss the matter with the notion that only that is true which fits with our illustrations, and that that which will not so fit is false. For instance, in worldly matters whoever does a thing, does it with some object. There is no inclination to action which has not a selfish interest in it. If, however, you apply this rule to the matter[3] of the creation, will you tell me what selfish interests Îṣhvara served, or will serve, by creating this universe? Ask all Ṣhâstras and Sub-Ṣhâstras on earth, Veda, Tantra, Purâṇa, Koran, the Bible, etc., and see if you get an answer to this question. Who can say that for a selfish end Îṣhvara has created this world? Ask of the greatest and bravest of warriors, "Why has this world been created?" and he will at once be vanquished and fly from the field. All discussions, disputes, inferences, and theories of Philosophy[4] are concerned with such questions as to how the world was created, is preserved, and will be destroyed. But directly the question arises as to why the world was created the six systems of darṣhaṇa (philosophy) become adarṣhaṇa

[1] Eight miles.
[2] Power.
[3] Tattva.
[4] Darṣhaṇaṣhâstra.

(sightless).[1] The authors of Yoga, Vishesha, Mimângsa, Nyâya, and Sângkhya, the Veda and Vedânta, are all blind to the path whereby an answer may be got to the question, " Why does this sangsâra exist ?" The Sâdhaka poet Râmaprasada has therefore sorrowfully said : " Six blind men wrote books, and they were called Darṣhaṇa (philosophies)." When Ṣhâstra does not answer this question I must either be a sceptic, or say that Îṣhvara must have some selfish purpose. But to say that He has self-interest is to divide Him. There can be no self without others, nor self-interest without self. As there can be no happiness without sorrow, nor sorrow without happiness, no light without darkness or darkness without light, so there can be no " others' interest " without " self-interest," and no " self-interest " without " others' interest." If Îṣhvara, then, created for His own selfish interest, there must certainly have been other interests existing before the creation. For there can be no self without another. And if there are others, then Îṣhvara is not one without a second, and there must be someone else to dispute His sovereignty (the idea of the Musalman's Satan comes in imperceptibly here). Secondly, if before Him there was another different from Him, who created that other ? If someone else created that other, then Îṣhvara is not the creator of all. And if it be said that Îṣhvara Himself created him, then in the first place was He such a fool as to Himself create His own enemy ? In the second place, had Îṣhvara any interest in creating him ? If He had such interest, who was that other in respect of whom such interest arose,[2] and against whom did Îṣhvara create him ? Proceeding continually in this manner to think of others and others, the world is filled with others only. And if then Îṣhvara begins His creation

1 Darṣhaṇa means sight. Philosophy is said to be the cause of sight.

2 A play upon the words " Svârtha " (own interest) and " parârtha " (another's interest), in the sense that the first suggests the second.

He becomes a creator no better than Vishvâmitra.[1] Secondly, if Îshvara created him without self-interest, what was the reason of being self-interested when creating us?

But be His interest served or not, what right has He to throw me on the rack of this sangsâra and crush me? You say He is almighty. That He may or may not be; but I am weak, and He is sufficiently mighty to crush me at every step. Is not, according to you, Îshvara just? Now, what sort of justice is it that He should crush me day and night at every step because He is mighty? You will say that I suffer the fruits of my own karma, and that for this He cannot be blamed. Then I reply: "Who created me and gave me this propensity for doing karma?"[2] It was the work of your Îshvara, and I am unable to understand what sort of mercy this is of your merciful Îshvara to put a thorn into one's eyes, and then to chastise one for crying on that account. Advocates of illustrations tell me now; shall I become a sceptic, or say that Îshvara is extremely partial or selfish? It is to such a conclusion that your illustration leads. Ask this illustration for once whether the selfish propensity of ourselves has any correspondence in Îshvara, and you will see that it will follow the same path as Veda and Vedânta have followed. Press it hard, and the illustration will say: "In the name of Dharma my name is dṛishṭânta (illustration). I am the end (anta) of what is visible (dṛishṭa). I am not even the beginning, not to speak of being the end, of that which I have neither seen nor heard. Illustration is the conclusion of only such things as we perceive by natural processes. But we must understand whose is this natural process? The nature of Jîva is to exist only, whilst that of the Mother of the

[1] That is, he would begin creation when the world was already created.

[2] Pravṛitti.

[3] That is, preserve.

universe is to create, exist, and destroy. How can we, with our nature made to exist only, judge of the nature of Her of whom we know neither the beginning nor the end? Illustration has not the power to move a step in a matter unheard and unseen beyond the scope of intellect."

Puzzled by this problem of the solution of questions by illustrations, Gîtânjali[1] sings, with a sorrowful mind, as follows:

Whose sport is this? this Sangsâra bound by Mâyâ from which there is no escape.
Who arranges this dance and clown show? Whom should I blame?
Who is the author of Yoga, Vishesha, Nyâya, Sângkhya, Veda, and Vedânta?[2] Why this Sangsâra?
All are blind to the answer of this question.
The blind put forth their shoulders to lift the blind thereon that they may trample on opponents and wave the banner of triumph.
These six systems of philosophy are a fearful sight.
They are mere disputations, like the rumblings of clouds,
Hence difference of opinion is likely to bring death by thunderstroke.
True it is Thy sport is eternal, and Thou playest the instrument of Mâyâ.
So decked like a clown we all dance. The whole is like a juggler's display.
Bands of ghosts play with dust, blind to the time Thou keepest.
From five ghosts innumerable ghosts are created.
The Sangsâra is but the playground of ghosts.
But, O Mother! I ask again, It is Thou who makest the Sangsâra dance,

[1] A volume of verse by the author.
[2] Veda and systems of philosophy.

And it dances ; but what fruit dost thou reap from its dance,
That Thou should make it dance incessantly ?
If Thou sayest Thou desirest no fruit, then the dance closes.
Who is it that Thou makest to dance ?
It is Thyself who dances under the enchantment of Thy own Mantra.

Discrimination says all are one ; or maybe I am different from Thee.
Thyself am I ; or I am Thine, according as it is unity or separation,
All are transient. Such is the supreme truth. Why, then, is Jîva in bonds ?
The fire of the Sangsâra burns the heart. Why does Jîva suffer so miserably ?
When a madman dances, what interest has he to dance ?
Similarly it is Thy nature to dance. There is neither beginning nor end of the dance Thou dancest.
Unceasing is Thy dance on the lotus of Mahâkâla's heart.
That dance makes dance the Sangsâra, and all its Jîvas in the womb of Kâla (time).
Whoever Thou mayest be, O Brahmamayî ! thou art the place of birth of the Brahmâṇḍa.
"I," "You," and "All" exist in Thee without whom all are blind.
The joyous dance of the Dancing Lady is in the hearts of all.
When it ceases, then Jîva as Jîva ceases also.

All this, O Mother ! is surely fruit of Karma. All are subject to Thy will.
Thou art full of desires to create, preserve, and destroy.
It was Thyself who existed before and exists now.
There is nothing of "I" in me.
In Thee all is born and destroyed.

That only which remains is the relation of Mother.
If in Thy aspect of Jîva Thou constantly makest Jîva dance,
Or laugh, or weep, wherein is the harm ? What matters it ?
Thine is the rule. Thyself art the ultimate cause.
This knowledge, too, I possess, but the mind is blind.
So, O Ṣhyâmâ ! O Mother ! I say mayest thou destroy Ṣhiva Chandra's sorrows.

For this it was that I said that all things do not equally come within the province of illustrations. If in spite of his having (as you say) no attributes, you impute attributes to the attributeless Îṣhvara, and call Him Creator, why, because of the absence of attributes are you so unwilling to admit that Îṣhvara with form has omnipotence?

Secondly, you are unwilling to admit that a small receptacle can contain a vast number of powers. But how is it that you will admit the existence of these powers where there is no receptacle at all ? Ṣhâstra says : "He takes swiftly even without hands, moves swiftly even without feet, sees even without eyes, and hears even without ears. He knows the universe, but none know Him. It is Him whom Ṣhâstra has called Pradhâna and Âdipurusha.[1] The Brahman without body and without hands, feet, eyes, and ears, can yet take, move, see, and hear. Why, then, are you astonished when told that the embodied Brahman, who has hands, feet, eyes, and ears, can take, move, see, and hear. The possibility, then, of applying the illustration that a small receptacle cannot hold a vast number of ṣhaktis is removed to the distance of a hundred yojanas.[2] You will next say that if He can see and hear without eyes or ears, why should He take eyes and ears to Himself ? Do you really take the Ṣhloka to mean that He has no eyes and ears, and still sees and hears ? If this be so you understand it

[1] That is, material and efficient cause. [2] About 8 or 9 miles.

wrongly. Just consider that seeing and hearing are functions of eyes and ears. Where did He who had never eyes and ears learn to see and hear? Who will believe that there is action without acting? As a matter of fact, He has neither action nor acting. He who is the sole cause of all causes of "acting" has not to wait for "acting" Himself.

He has no eyes, ears, nor sees, nor hears. He is the embodiment of eternal knowledge, and is all consciousness. Ignorance cannot avail against Him so as to make Him lack the knowledge of anything in the universe. Even without the organs of sense, He is full of that knowledge which you and I acquire only through direct perception by means of the organs of sight, hearing, and so forth. He does not lack knowledge because of the absence of sense-organs. He knows all without seeing or hearing. Ṣhâstra has therefore said: "He knows the universe, but none know Him." In fact, it is not the purpose of Ṣhâstra to say that He sees even without eyes. Ṣhâstra means that He has knowledge of all things even without seeing. For what we understand by sight is not possible without eyes. For this reason Ṣhâstra only says at the end, "None know Him," instead of saying at each of the different parts of the ṣhloka: "None hold Him," "None go to Him," "None see Him," "None hear Him." The sutra consists only of that part of the ṣhloka which says "None know Him." All other portions are merely explanatory and are required that we may understand it. Ṣhâstra first of all taking a comprehensive view of the various forms of knowledge acquired by direct perception mentions the sense organs through which such perception is had, and then says that the knowledge which we acquire by direct perception through the organs of sense exists eternally in Him despite the absence of such organs. Therefore at the end only it is said: "None know Him." The conclusion is that although He knows everybody, none

[1] Aphorism, verse.

know Him; or, in other words, He is the vessel of all knowledge, but none are the vessel of His knowledge. All knowledge rests in Him, and has Him as its end. This is what Ṣhâstra means, and not that He sees even without eyes.

Thirdly, you say that eternal Ṣhakti cannot exist in limited forms, by which you wish to say that His Ṣhakti of seeing all things is infinite, but that the eyes of a limited body are small. It does not, however, follow from this that you have no faith in His possessing a body or eyes. On the contrary, your dissatisfaction appears to rest on the ground that the eyes I speak of are very small. You wish to see a body much bigger than that to which I refer; so big that we cannot see the whole of it from head to foot all at once. You are then a more profound believer in Îṣhvara's body than I am. In fact, whenever Bhagavân (or Bhagavatî) has shown His (or Her) true appearance to a devotee in order to gratify the desire of the believer in His or Her body, whenever a devotee, weeping, has eagerly prayed to see Its true appearance, then Bhagavân, who is ever merciful to devotees, has shown His universal appearance; and knowing that that appearance, boundless and of shining brilliance, is invisible to ordinary eyes, He has first granted Divine vision to the devotee, and then manifested that appearance to Him. The following occurs in the Bhagavadgîtâ:

"O Supreme Lord, even as Thou describest Thyself, O best of beings, I desire to see Thy form omnipotent.

"If Thou thinkest that by me It can be seen, O Lord, Lord of Yoga, then show me Thine imperishable Self."

The Blessed Lord said: "Behold, O Pârtha! a Form of Me, a hundredfold, a thousandfold, various in kind, divine, various in colours and shapes.

"Behold the Âdityas, the Vasus, the Rûdras, the two Âshvins, and also the Maruts;[1] behold many marvels never seen ere this, O Bhârata."

[1] Vaidik Devatâ.

"Here, to-day, behold the whole universe, movable and immovable, existing in My body, O Guḍâkeṣha. What else desirest thou to see?

"But verily thou art not able to behold Me with these thine eyes. The Divine eye I give unto Thee. Behold My Sovereign Yoga."

Sanjaya said: "Having thus spoken, O King, the great Lord of Yoga, Hari, showed to Pârtha His supreme form as Lord.

"With many mouths and eyes, with many visions of marvel, with many Divine ornaments, with many upraised Divine weapons.

"Wearing Divine necklaces and vestures, anointed with Divine unguents, the God all-marvellous, boundless, with face turned everywhere.

"If the splendour of a thousand suns were to blaze out together in the sky, that might resemble the glory of that Mahâtman.[1]

"There Pâṇḍava beheld the whole universe, divided into manifold parts, standing in one in the body of the Deity of Deities.

"Then he, Dhananjaya, overwhelmed with astonishment, his hair upstanding, bowed down his head to the Shining One, and with joined palms spake."

Arjuna said:

"Within Thy Form, O God, the Gods, I see
All grades of beings with distinctive marks;
Brahmâ, the Lord, upon His lotus-throne,
The Ṛishis all, and Serpents, the Divine
With mouths, eyes, arms, breasts multitudinous,
I see Thee everywhere, unbounded Form.
Beginning, middle, end, nor source of Thee,
Infinite Lord, infinite Form, I find."[2]

The following passage occurs in the discourse between

[1] Great Spirit.

[2] Bhagavadgîtâ, chap. xi., verses 3-16. I have slightly altered Mrs. Besant's translation in the first three lines of this page.

Devî and Himâlaya in the Bhagavatîgîtâ in Mahâbhâgavata. Himâlaya said :

" Mother, although Thou art eternal (devoid of birth and death), Thou hast graciously taken birth in my house. The cause of this grace must surely be a store of religious merits accumulated in many births in consequence of which I am favoured to see Thee in this appearance of a Brahmamayî daughter. (But for the fruit of austerities and devotions earned in scores of births this could not have been even with a thousand years of prayer. By the sight of this appearance of Thine all the fruit of religious merit has been exhausted. I am thus, O Mother! destitute and without claim. Formerly you were bound to show mercy to me ; but now, O Mother! I am a mendicant for your mercy.) Of Thy grace show unto me now Thy appearance as Maheṣhvarî. (Viṣhveṣhvarî, Thou art the Îṣhvari of the universe—Viṣhva. Poor as I am, what can I do for Thee ? What is there, O Mother! in my power to do ? All that I am capable of is to offer my lasting obeisance to those beauteous lotus-feet of Thine.) I bow to Thee."

Viṣheṣhvarî Devî said : " Father, I grant you divine vision. (With that vision) look at my appearance as Îṣhvara of all. Destroy all the doubts of your heart, and know Me as holding all Devas in Myself."

Ṣhrî Mahâdeva said to Nârada : " Thus granting the most excellent (knowledge of Brahman) to the King of mountains who made obeisance, Devî then showed him Her divine Maheṣhvara aspect effulgent with the brilliance of ten million moons ; bearing on His head, with its clusters of matted hair, the beautiful crescent moon ; holding in His left hand a trident, and with the right bestowing blessings, yet awesome and terrible to see." Himâlaya was struck with wonder, and (with a heart fearful and unsatisfied) said again :

" Mother, show me another aspect of Thine. Thereupon, O great Muni! the Devî, eternal and of universal

form, withdrew that appearance of Hers and showed another."

"This next was beautiful as the moon in autumn. The head bore a beautiful crown, and the four hands were adorned with a conch-shell, discus, mace, and lotus.[1] The form was brilliant, with three lustrous eyes, clad with celestial garments, hung with celestial garlands, anointed with celestial perfumes, and its fair lotus feet were adored by great yogîs. The King of mountains saw that from all sides of this vast[2] body innumerable arms were extended, and innumerable feet were displayed, and that faces with opened eyes were all over its body. The sight of this supreme excellent appearance, replete with the qualities of Îṣhvara, filled the Great Mountain with wonder. Prostrating himself at the lotus feet of his daughter Brahmamayî, Himâlaya, said :

"Mother, the sight of this supreme and excellent appearance of Thine, replete with the qualities of Îṣhvara, has filled me with wonder. Again I pray Thee show me another aspect of Thine. O Highest Îṣhvara, for Him who possesses Thee none in this world can grieve. He is truly blessed. (There is no one in this world who has not a want of some sort, but, O Mother ! what want can he have who possesses Thee ; whose self is merged in Thy vast Self ; whose littleness has by its force compelled Thee to abandon Thy greatness, and to attach Thyself to the heart of Thy devotee ; whose force has compelled the Îṣhvara of all to supplicate the supplicant, the Kâlikâ maintainer of the universe entreating the devotee that he may be satisfied ; and has even compelled, O Mother ! the mother of the three worlds, to incarnate as daughter. A want must exist in relation to something, but, O Mother ! where Thou existeth such a want can never exist. Thou art the Ṣhakti in all things good or bad, lifeless or living, in the world. So I say, O Mother ! he who possesses Thee of universal form can, because of Thee,

[1] Ṣhangkha, chakra, gadâ, and padma of Vishṇu. [2] Virâṭ.

have no want, not merely in this universe alone, but even in untold millions of universes. People grieve for him alone who is destitute. But who will grieve for him who holds Thee ? who holdest all things in Thyself ? Sinking in Thy existence Jîva is beyond all want and its satisfaction. Though he be the meanest and poorest of men in the sangsâra, he is by Thy grace a King of Kings. None therefore grieve for him. All rather envy him, and being unable to emulate him speak of him as a man thrice blessed. O Mother ! by Thy grace favour me ; even after receiving such grace I again seek grace, for how else shall I dare to look at the true appearance of Her whose appearances are numberless ?) Knowing that I shall receive this grace, I say, O merciful Mother ! obeisance to Thy feet for evermore."

After seeing many other forms of his daughter, Himâlaya, at the end of the hymn,[1] says : " Mother, who is there, Deva or human being, in the three worlds capable of fully describing this universe, which is Thy appearance, or Thy qualities, even by the effort of many ages ? (Devî, Thy true aspect is unapproachable by even Brahmâ and the other Devas.) What can one of small intelligence like myself say of it ? What I have to say, O Mother ! is this : If Thou hast mercy for me, by Thy grace charm me not by Thy great mâyâ. I have nothing else to say to Thee. O Mother ! Îṣhvarî of the universe, I bow to Thee."

Oh, thou advocate of formlessness, after witnessing all this vast play full of forms and attributes as described in the Ṣhâstra, do you still grieve at the smallness of His appearance ? Wheresoever you will look you will see innumerable eyes, innumerable feet, innumerable hands, innumerable heads, which even infinite space is unable to contain. What more eternal sports of eternity do you wish to see ? Even Arjuna, conqueror of the three worlds, was tormented with fear at the sight of the terrible Kâla-aspect of Bhagavân, and, weeping, said :

[1] Stava.

"Radiant, Thou touchest heaven, rainbow-hued,
With opened mouths and shining vast-orbed eyes.
My inmost self is quaking, having seen.
My strength is withered, Vishṇu, and my peace,
Like Time's destroying flames : I see Thy teeth,
Upstanding, spread within expanded jaws ;
Nought know I anywhere, no shelter find.
Mercy, O God ! refuge of all the worlds."[1]

(Formerly I thought that you were a Deva, now I know that you are Devesha (Lord of Devas). Formerly I thought that Thy abode was in the universe. Now I know that the universe is in Thee. So I say, O Lord ! the conclusions at which I, a Jîva, have arrived are false. Be now pleased with Thy natural graciousness to grant me power to see Thy true aspect.)

Sâdhaka, do you still believe that you and I have the courage to look upon that appearance ? Does this enormous power which shatters the Brahmâṇḍa and destroys all the regions bespeak, in your opinion, but a small ṣhakti ? The quantity of water which the sea holds is not small, but the jars which you and I possess are small. The Ṣhaktis and Vibhûtis[2] in the body of Bhagavân are unlimited and eternal, but neither your nor my brain can contain them. The smallness of the quantity of water in our jar makes us, when sitting in our houses, think that the endless sea is small when in truth it is not. In case you should say that a perfect display of Îṣhvara's ṣhakti was not proved by the fact that it overpowered the weak human heart of Arjuna, frightened at the prospect of kith and kin, I will cite another example. It is true that Arjuna, in his play as a human being,[3] was already afraid of committing an unrighteous act. That fear was the fear of a Jîva, but He who is above both righteousness and unrighteousness, and is ever feared by Indra, Yama, Chanḍra, and Sûrya, is afraid of nothing. The heart of

[1] Bhagavadgîtâ, chap. xi., verses 24 and 25. [2] Manifestations.
[3] Arjuna was an incarnation of the Ṛishi Nara.

the almighty Supreme Purusha, higher than the highest, who alone among the Devas is the vanquisher of death, whose name, Parameṣhvara, is the true epithet of His real self, who after he has destroyed the Brahmâṇḍa[1] at the time of the great dissolution,[2] Himself exists for ever as Pûrṇa Brahman :[3] Mahâkâla, unwaisting, untouched by time, immortal, is neither weak nor afraid of anything. Yet, notice how He, too, once trembled with fear and was beyond Himself when He could not find a path of escape.

When Mahâdeva refused Jagadambâ permission to attend Daksha's sacrifice,[4] even though She repeatedly besought it, the daughter of Daksha,[5] who is eternal perfect Brahman, seeing that Bhagavân was influenced by a husband's vanity,[6] assumed a terrible aspect, with the object of shattering that vanity. Shâstra gives the following account of this in Mahâbhâgavata. Ṣhrî Mahâdeva said :

"When thus spoken to by Maheṣhvara, Satî, the daughter of Daksha, with eyes reddened with anger, pondered for a moment. Ṣhangkara[7] has obtained me as His wife (by virtue of My own gift) after long prayer and severe austerities;[8] yet to-day He slights and speaks harshly to me (though in the play of incarnation He is my husband. I shall forsake this proud Mahâdeva, as also My father, the arrogant Prajâpati, and in my own play live for some time in My own abode, the region of Kaivalya. Later on, being begged (and entreated in severe sâdhana) by this Maheṣhvara, I shall reappear as Himâlaya's daughter, and become Ṣhambhu's wife. Pondering thus in her mind for a moment, the Daughter of Daksha opened Her three fearful eyes, and overpowered Ṣhangkara with illusion.[9] Ṣhambhu stood still at the sight of the

[1] The egg of Brahman, or universe. [2] Mahâpralaya.
[3] Perfect or complete Brahman. [4] Yajna.
[5] That is, the Devi (Jagadambâ) in Her incarnation as Satî, wife of Ṣhiva.
[6] Thinking himself superior to his wife: as appears from the text a very ancient piece of presumption.
[7] Ṣhiva. [8] Tapasyâ. [9] Moha.

Devî, with Her lips parted in anger and eyes shining like destructive fire. On being thus looked at by the frightened Maheṣhvara, the Devî suddenly displayed the terrible teeth in Her terrible mouth and laughed aloud. On hearing that frightful sound of laughter, Mahâdeva was paralyzed with fright. Opening His three eyes with great effort He saw (but once) the world-terrifying aspect of Jagadambâ. When He looked upon Her, Her body immediately lost its golden colour, and took on that of a dark mass of crushed eye-paint.[1] She appeared naked as space, with dishevelled hair, with a lolling tongue, and four arms. She was languorous with desire,[2] terribly furious, bathed in sweat (caused by her anger), and of frightful countenance; garlanded with skulls, bearing on her head a brilliant crown and a crescent moon, shining like ten million suns. Her voice thundered loudly.

In such a fearful aspect Sati, dazzling by the mass of her own brilliant energy,[3] stood before Mahâdeva, and uttered loud peals of laughter. Seeing the wonderful appearance of the Devî, Mahâdeva lost all self-control, and, bewildered with fright, sought to flee in all directions. Seeing the Lord of Kailâṣha thus overcome by fear, the daughter of Daksha again uttered peal after peal of dreadful laughter, and, with the object of reassuring Him, shouted: "Fear not! fear not!" Hearing this cry and the fierce peals of laughter, Mahâdeva was so bewildered with terror that He frantically rushed again in flight in every direction. Seeing Her husband so overcome with fear Parameṣhvarî was moved to pity, and with a view to restrain Him stood for a moment before Him at each of the ten quarters of the Heaven in the form of the ten Mahâvidyâs. In whatever direction He ran with haste He thus saw a fearful form standing before Him. In fright He fled in another direction, only to be again confronted by another such form. After having thus run

[1] Anjana. [2] Kâmâlasakalĕvarâ. [3] Tejas.

towards each of the ten quarters of the Heaven He saw that there was none without danger for Him. Then, feeling altogether helpless, He sat down on earth and shut His three eyes, and (a moment later as through an inner fear) he opened them. He saw before Him Ṣhyâmâ. Her smiling face was like a full-blown lotus. Her breasts were large. Her eyes wide and terrible, and Her hair dishevelled. She was four-armed, naked as space, shining with the light of ten million suns (although black in colour like a fresh cloud), and stood facing the south, the heavenly form of Dakshiṇâ. Seeing Her thus (of a strange form full of an uncommon beauty), Ṣhambhu, as if in great fear, asked : " Who art Thou, Ṣhyâmâ ?[1] Where has Satî, my beloved, gone ?"

Devî said : " Mahâdeva, I am Thy Satî here standing before Thee, and yet Thou dost not recognize Me ? Why is Thy mind so confused to-day ? Do I appear to Thee different from Thy Satî ?"

Ṣhiva said : " If Thou really art my beloved Satî, daughter of Daksha, why hast Thou become black and fearful ? Who are these forms of terrible aspect standing in all directions around me ? Amongst these which art Thou ? Tell me everything, for these wonderful forms have made Me greatly afraid."

Satî said : " I am the subtle (beyond the reach of speech and mind) Mahâprakṛiti who creates and destroys. Owing to the promise I had aforetime given Thee (to bless Thee for Thy tapasya) I (put my true form under restraint, and) incarnated as a fair girl in Daksha's house merely to get Thee as My husband (to charm Thee by becoming Thy wife). I have to-day assumed this fearful aspect for the destruction of father Daksha's great yajna. But, O Maheṣhvara ! Thou hast no reason to be afraid of Me (for this fearful aspect is assumed to terrify Daksha alone). The ten terrible forms which Thou seest in each of the ten directions are each of them My aspect. Oh,

[1] Black Lady.

Ṣhambhu! Thou possessest immense wisdom. Be not afraid (but see with Thy eye of wisdom). Thou art My most beloved husband, and I am Thy wife. Seeing Thee so greatly afraid and turning in all directions, I stood before Thee blocking them by these ten forms of Mine."

Ṣhiva said: "Thou art the subtle (beyond the reach of speech and mind) Mûlaprakṛiti who creates, preserve. and destroys. It is not possible that one should know Thee who art beyond the reach of speech and mind, so, not knowing Thee through great illusion, I have said unpleasant words to Thee. Pardon me, O Parameṣhvarî, the offence which I have thus committed. Tell me, O Consort of Ṣhiva with fearful eyes, the names of each of these ten most dreadful forms of Thine standing in each of the ten quarters."

Devî said: "O Mahâdeva, these Mahâvidyâs are but different aspects of My own Self. Listen! Their names are Kâlî, Târâ, Shoḍaṣhî, Bhubaneṣhvarî, Bhairavî, Chhinnamastâ, Sundarî,[1] Bagalâmukhî, Dhûmâvatî, and Mâtangî."

Ṣhiva said: "O Devî! who supporteth the universe, if Thou art pleased with me, tell me which of these forms bear these respective names."

Devî said: "The dark-coloured form, with terrible eyes, which Thou dost see before Thee is Kâlî. She who is above Thee of Ṣhyâmâ[2] colour is Mahâvidyâ Târâ, the very image of Mahâkâla. The lean, destitute, and very frightful Devî whom Thou dost see on Thy right side is, O high-souled Mahâdeva, Mahâvidyâ Chhinnamastâ. O Ṣhambhu, the Devî on Thy left side is Bhubaneṣhvarî. She who is behind you is Devî Bagalâmukhî, Destructress of foes. She who appears as a widow on the south-east is Devî Mahâvidyâ Dhûmâvatî, a great Îṣhvarî. The Devî on the south-west is Tripurâsundarî.[3] In the north-west is Mâtangî, and in the north-east Mahâvidyâ

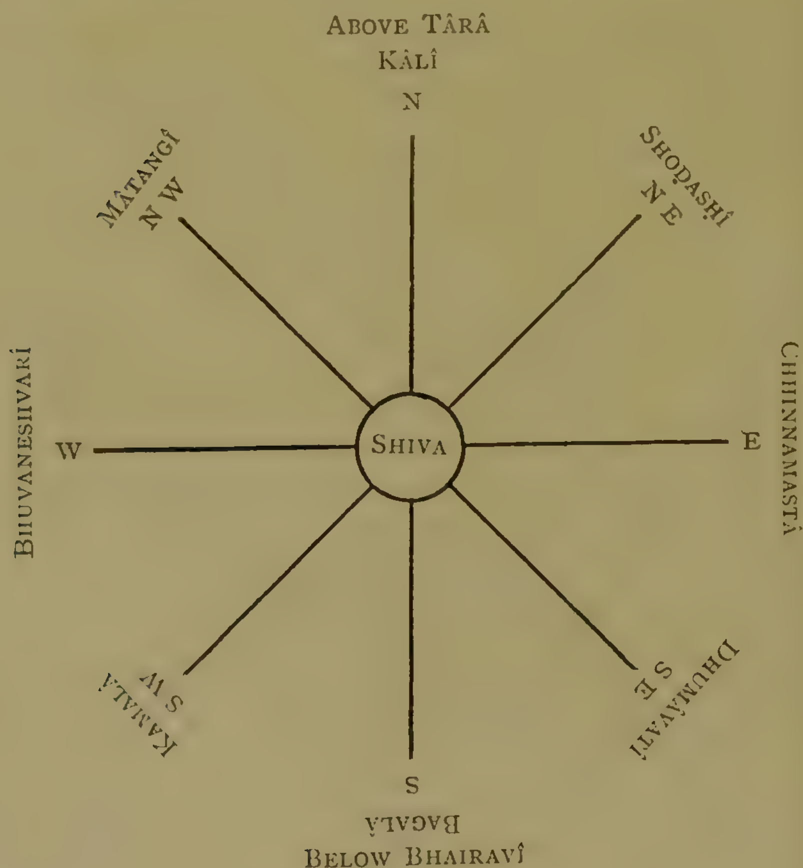
[1] Kamalâ or Mahâlakshmî.

[2] Grass green, dark blue, blackish.

[3] Kamalâ

Shoḍaṣhî, a great Îṣhvarî. She who is below Thee is Bhairavî.[1] O Ṣhambhu ! be not afraid (at the sight of these ten forms, which are My manifestations, and destroy the fear of existence). Of my many forms (ninety millions of manifestations)[2] these ten are the best (the most perfect vibhûtis).[3] To such Sâdhakas as worship them with devotion they grant the four-fold fruit[4] and

[1] See Daṣha-Mahâvidyâ-Upâsanâ-Rahasya, by Prasanna Kumâra Ṣhastrî, which illustrates both the figures and yantras. The text also illustrates the positions as follows :



[2] Vibhûtis.

[3] See p. 242, note 2.

[4] Dharma artha, kâma, moksha (see Introduction).

all that is desired. O Maheṣhvara! all such things as Sâdhakas desire, such as Mâraṇa, Uchchâtana, Kshobhana, Mohana, Drâvana, Stambhana, Vidveshaṇa,[1] are granted by them. Each of these ten Mahâvidyâs is to be kept secret and never revealed. Thou shalt be the ordinancer and interpreter of yantras, mantras, pûjâ homa, puraṣhcharaṇa,[2] stotra,[3] kavacha[4] practices, rules, and all else concerning them which may be required by sâdhakas. There is none else in the world who can reveal them. The Āgama Ṣhâstra which Thou shalt reveal from Thy mouth will be renowned in the three worlds. O Ṣhangkara! Āgama and Veda are my two arms. With them I support the entire universe of moving and unmoving things. The world is maintained by Dharma, as ordained in Tantra and in Veda. The fool who disregards them through delusion falls assuredly from the arms which save the three worlds. I am unable to save him who, in disregard of Âgama or Veda, worships Me in a manner different from that ordained in it. This is nothing but the strictest truth. Âgama and Veda are both causes of liberation. But both are difficult to understand and carry out. Knowledge of them is hard to attain even by intelligent men. They are eternal and without end. The intelligent will know that the purpose of both the Ṣhâstras is the same, and will practise dharma accordingly. The wise will never, through delusion, consider them to be different. Those who worship these ten Mahâvidyâs will act like Vaiṣhṇavas, but in rapt concentration will rest their hearts on Me. The Sâdhaka will with great care keep secret, and never speak to others of mantra, yantra, kavacha, and other matters which he receives from his guru. If these things are given out siddhi will be unattained, and evil will result. A good Sâdhaka will therefore conceal them with every care.

[1] "Magical" powers of destruction, driving away, perturbing, enchanting, putting to flight, stopping or paralyzing, causing dissension.
[2] See Introduction. [3] Hymn. [4] Amulet.

High-souled Mahâdeva, I have now spoken to you of the subject of worship. (Let not the sight of these aspects of Mine strike terror into Thy heart, and make Thee doubt My single-minded love for Thee. I am Thy beloved wife, and Thou, too, art My very beloved husband. To-day I wish only to humble the pride of my father, Prajâpati. So I pray to Thee, O Deva of Devas, that if Thou wilt not go to the place of sacrifice permit Me so to go. O Deva ! it is my intention, with Thy permission, to go and destroy the sacrifice[1] of my father, Prajâpati Daksha (and not to frighten Thee.)

Mahâdeva said to Nârada : " Hearing these words of the Devî, Ṣhumbha stood as one struck with intense fear, and then spoke as follows to the fierce-eyed Kâlî."

Ṣhiva said : " Devî, I know that Thou art Parameṣhvarî, the best, perfect, and supreme Prakṛiti. Pardon me the unbecoming words which, overpowered by delusion, I have in forgetfulness used towards Thee. Thou art the primal[2] supreme Vidyâ[3] who existeth in all created things. Thou art independent and supreme. Thou art Ṣhakti. Who is there to order Thee to do or to desist from doing anything ? O Ṣhivâ[4] ! if thou goest to destroy Daksha's sacrifice, what power have I to restrain that ? And why should I dare to do so ? O Maheṣhvarî ! pardon me for what (presuming on my position as Thy husband) I have, under the influence of intense delusion, said to Thee. Do Thou as it pleases Thee."[5]

[1] Because Daksha had, to offer him a slight, purposely neglected to invite Ṣhiva, Her husband.

[2] Âdyâ.

[3] As opposed to Avidyâ (see Introduction), though She is both.

[4] The Devî as wife of Ṣhiva.

[5] Satî then went to the sacrifice (yajna). There, Daksha poured invectives on the head of Ṣhiva. Satî's great devotion to her husband (the Hindu girl prays that she may become like Satî and get a husband like Ṣhiva) could not bear to hear Daksha's abuse of Him, and She gave up Her life. Nandi hastened to Kailâṣha and told Ṣhiva, who rose in terrible wrath. Fire flashed from his eye and took the fearful form of Bhairava, who went with a host of ghosts and goblins to destroy the yajna. Ṣhiva followed. The yajna was destroyed.

Interpreter of Ṣhâstras, do you consider that that display of power is of no account, at the sight of which even Mahârûdra, who causes the great dissolution, was astounded, trembled with fear, and sought to flee?

When Niṣhumbha was killed in the battle with the Devî,[1] Ṣhumbha, seeing Brahmânî, Vaishṇavî, Mâheṣvarî, Indrânî, Kaumârí, Vârâhî, Nârasinghî, Châmuṇḍâ, Kauṣhikî, and Ṣhivadûtî,[2] fighting with fury, sarcastically addressed Her who rejoices in war, saying:

"O Durgâ, proud of the strength of Thy arms, be no longer proud. She who fights with the help of the powers of other Devas has no reason to pride Herself so much as the single-handed conqueror of the three worlds."[3]

She who dwells in all hearts and who ever leans to mercy showed it then without stint. In that field of battle she made Ṣhumbha a reply unheard of even by great yogîs who had attained siddhi and became pure and free of the bonds of life. Jagadambâ knew that the King of the Daityas was moved in his actions by an ill-directed intelligence and a naturally wicked nature. Thus, just as a mother cannot forsake her son even if he commits hundreds and thousands of offences against her, but rather with smile and joy takes him on her lap, and then with feigned anger calls him wicked, so the Mother of the

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Nandi Ṣhiva's follower cut off Daksha's head and threw it into the fire. Ṣhiva then took up the dead body of Satî and went away bearing it on His shoulder. The story continues with the history of the Mahâpîṭhas (see Introduction). Satî reappeared in Her incarnation as daughter of the Mountain-king. The story of the Daksha-yajna is one of the most ancient, as it is one of the best known, of all Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti legends.

[1] The brothers Niṣhumbha and Ṣhumbha were Lords of the Demoniac Dânavas, who had defeated the Devas. The Devî, however, in whose body was the united Ṣhakti of all the Devas, slew first Dhumralochana, Chaṇḍa, and Muṇḍa, who had been sent against Her, and then the great Dânava Raktabîja, and finally both Ṣhumbha and Niṣhumbha (see Chaṇḍî of Markandeya Purâṇa).

[2] The Ṣhaktis of Brahmâ, Vishṇu, Ṣhiva, and other Ṣhaktis.

[3] That is, Ṣhumbha himself.

universe, looking upon Ṣhumbha with merciful eyes but with such a feigned anger, said: "Wicked one, I alone exist. Who other is there in the world? Look! All these manifestations[1] will enter into Me. I will then dispel the doubt which has arisen in your mind at the sight of a number of Devaṣhaktis." (The mother, as if caressingly, said: "Wicked one, you see these Devaṣhaktis, and now by a trick wish to know the truth concerning them.") Then in an instant, at the will of Her who is all will Herself, Brâhmaṇî and all other Devîs entered into Brahmamayî's body, and (Ṣhumbha saw that in the battle-field) there was none but Ambikâ alone.

Then Devî again said: "I withdraw the many forms in which I (displaying my wealth of manifestation[1]) appeared. I now alone stand in the battle-field. So, Ṣhumbha, now desist."

It was as if a boy on seeing many mothers was disconsolate on being unable to recognize his own. The Mother therefore showed him Her real self, and consoled him, saying: "Look, I am thy Mother, so be quiet." But Ṣhumbha was not one to be satisfied with knowing what She was without letting Her know what he was, so putting on the arms and accoutrements of the hero, the hero son of the heroine Mother advanced to heroic struggle. O Mother! he who runs to your arms with his own strength is not a mendicant for your mercy. So the music of war rang out, fiercely shaking heaven, earth, and the nether world, and the ever-triumphant Lord of Daityas stood in hand-to-hand conflict, to the sound of victory-giving shouts from this and other worlds.

Ṣhâstra says that when, wounded in the heart by the Devî's spear he fell dead and dropped from the sky to earth, the latter, with its seven principal mountain ranges,[2] seven seas, and seven islands, shook with the unbearable weight of his body. At his death all the regions rejoiced. The whole world regained health. The

1 Vibhûti, see p. 242, *post*, note 2. 2 Kulâchala.

sky, hitherto overcast with a deep mist, cleared. Inauspicious clouds which had been shooting meteors all around, disappeared. Rivers, the flow of which had long been stayed by the din of the twang of his bow and his thundering shouts, became on his destruction again free, and moved along their channels. The hearts of Devas were filled with immeasurable joy. Gandharvas[1] commenced to sing in sweet tones. Kinnaras, Siddhas, and Sâdhyas[2] began to play on musical instruments. Apsarâs[3] commenced to dance. Pure air again flowed; the sun at length assumed his natural radiance. Fires could at last burn quietly, and without making the heavens resound with the sound of their burning.

Sâdhaka, whose power can compare with the power of him for whose sake the ordained course of nature was arrested? Is it not a sign of the shortness of our life, intelligence, good fortune, and sâdhana that we presume to deem small the power of manifestation[4] of Her whose great mâyâ charmed even the great charmer Ṣhumbha, ruler over the three worlds? Can you say that the Ṣhakti is small of Her who can make the impossible possible, whose mâyâ made even Bhagavan Râmachandra forgetful of himself upon the occasion of the destruction of the hundred-headed Râvaṇa.[5] Does not Her play in Her incarnations as a fish, tortoise, and boar, whereby She saved the Vedas, supported the universe, and held the earth on the end of the boar's tusk, bear evidence of a full display of divine Ṣhakti?[6] The sudden appearance, bursting

[1] Celestial beings (Devayonis) who, according to the Vishṇu Purâṇa, were sons of Brahmâ, "born imbibing melody"; celestial musicians and choristers who play and sing at the banquets of the Devas; belonging, together with the Apsarâs—their wives—to Indra's heaven.

[2] Other classes of Devayonis.

[3] Beautiful and voluptuous Devayonis of Indra's Heaven; wives of the Gandharvas; produced at the churning of the ocean.

[4] Vibhûti.

[5] When Râma was returning from Langkâ, he met the hundred-headed Râvaṇa. On seeing him, forgetful that he was Bhagavân, Râma did not dare to fight.

[6] Various incarnations of Vishṇu

through a crystal pillar, of the strange half-man, half-lion, in order to save Prahlâda, chief among devotees;[1] the display of the Brahmâṇḍa within Her mouth to mother Yaṣhodâ;[2] the destruction of Putanâ by sucking milk from her breasts;[3] the upholding of Mount Govardhana by a boy of seven[4]; the charming, unknown to the three worlds of Brahmâ through one whole year, by the raising of calves, cows, and cowherds by mâyâ[5]; the humbling of the pride of Kandarpa[6] by the assumption, in playful favour to devotees, of thousands of forms in early youth for the gratification of herdswomen who were maddened with love, and had attained siddhi by the practice of tapas for many ages[7]; the showing of the virâṭ[8] aspect to Akrura[9] in the waters of the Yamuna[10]—all these are doubtless not perfect manifestations so far as the perfect Brahman is concerned, yet, O man, I ask you, can you imagine even in dream anything greater than these? The world of Jîvas could (were it to desire it) obtain even greater things of Him. But there are none who have the capacity to entertain such a desire.

"Manifest Thy divine ṣhakti to such an extent." It is beyond the power of Jîva to measure His greatness by saying "to such an extent." For this reason the extent to which He has manifested His ṣhakti for the removal of the burdens of the earth in consequence of

1 The Nṛisingha Avatâra of Vishṇu.

2 Yaṣhodâ was wife of Nanda, in whose home Kṛishṇa was brought up. The infant Kṛishṇa showed to Yaṣhodâ the universe in His mouth.

3 Pûtanâ was a female demon (Râkshasi) with poisoned breast, sent by Kangsa to destroy the infant Kṛishṇa, who, however, destroyed her by sucking her breasts.

4 By Kṛîshṇa.

5 Brahmâ stole the calves and cowherds of Gokula in order to test Kṛishṇa's power. The latter assumed the forms of the stolen cows and cowherds, so their absence was not noticed. This lasted for one year, when the calves and cowherds were restored by Brahmâ, and Kṛishṇa withdrew his mâyâ.

6 Deva of love. The reference here is to the Râsalîlâ.

7 That is, the Gopîs.

8 Universal.

9 Uncle of Kṛishṇa, who induced Râma and Kṛishṇa to go to Mathura and kill Kangsa.

10 River Yamunâ.

the tapasyâ performed by the devotees is sufficient for Jîvas. So I say, Do not trouble yourself with the thought that the receptacle is small. It is not really so; it assumes a small form to serve the extremely small purposes of the small world. You and I, the small Jîvas of this small world, do not count even as much as the smallest atom in His view. What right have we to see His universal aspect, which is rarely seen by Brahmâ and other Devas. Secondly, the Lord of the universe has no need to show that sort of lordliness which you and I show to others with greatness, largeness, and the like. What avails our ignoring of His lordliness when even Ṣhumbha, Niṣhumbha, Râvaṇa, and Kumbhakarṇa,[1] could avail nothing by their ignoring it? So I say that when the greatly powerful King, Vali, could not save himself by looking on Vâmanadeva[2] as really a dwarf, why do we, who are really dwarfs, stretch out our arms to catch the moon shining in the firmament of the devotee's heart? As you use the illustration of water to show that a small receptacle cannot contain a vast ṣhakti so I will take that of fire to show that an immeasurable ṣhakti can be eternally hidden even in a small receptacle. Put a spark of fire on a mountain heap of grass, and you will see that spark will extend throughout it and will illumine every side with enormous tongues of flame, kissing the cheeks of the firmament. The spark is no longer a spark, but has become a destructive fire flaming terrifically and fit to consume the whole heap. Similarly, however small Bhagavân's appearance in His incarnations may seem to you to be, bring to it a substance fit for the display of divine manifestation[3] and you will see that the Brahmâṇḍa is filled with the eternal Brahma-play of Ṣhakti and has become the field for the display of Ṣhakti such as the Nṛisingha of Prahlâda,[4] Ṣhrîkṛishṇa

[1] Daityas and Râkshasas. The last was brother of Râvaṇa.

[2] Incarnation of Vishṇu in the form of a dwarf.

[3] Vibhûti.

[4] The man-lion incarnation of Vishnu for the protection of the son of Hiranyakasipu.

of Arjuna, Gopâla[1] of Yaṣhodâ, Ṣhyâmasundara[2] of the herdswomen;[3] Nandanandana of Akrura,[4] Ṣhyâmâ of Ṣhumbha,[5] Umâ of Himâlaya,[6] Sîtâ of Râma,[7] and Satî of Ṣhiva.[8] You will then realize that His greatness is not small, but that the Jîva's capacity is small: His appearance is not small, but the eyes of Jîva are so. He is not small, but you and I are so. So I say, O Sâdhaka, do not suppose that a small receptacle cannot hold the eternal ṣhakti, or proceed to measure the greatness of Mahâmâyâ, Whose power can make that possible which seems impossible.

But while there is yet time, seek the protection of Her feet, and opening the door of your heart say: "Mother, all my intelligence, learning, and reasonings are at an end. Now be gracious to me. In my struggle with doubt stand before me as Thou didst stand before Arjuna and before Ṣhumbha. Fill the world for once with Thy true appearance so that my birth may be blessed, my life may be blessed, my eyes may be blessed, and I, O Mother, may sink in Thee, becoming wholly Thine."

1 One of Kṛishṇa's 108 names. That by which he was called by Yaṣhodâ.

2 The name by which Kṛishṇa was called by the Gopîs.

3 Gopîs of Vraja who loved Kṛishṇa.

4 Name of Kṛishṇa; as to Akrura, see p. 198, note 9.

5 The Devî Victrix of the demon Ṣhumbha (see p. 195).

6 The Devî as daughter of Himâlaya and wife of Ṣhiva. As to the derivation of the name see the first canto of Kâlidâsa's Kumârasambhavam. Umâ unmarried, is the ṣhakti of will, as the Sutra says, "Ichchhâṣhakti umâ kumârî.

7 Wife of Râma.

8 Devî, wife of Ṣhiva and daughter of Daksha.

CHAPTER VI

WORSHIP OF DEVATÂS

SÂDHAKA, against our wish we are obliged to say again that the healers of whom we have spoken are wont to quote four sayings from the Mahânirvâṇa Tantra as evidence in favour of their views. Though these statements are supposed to be evidence on their behalf, we shall, in order to show what this evidence is, quote the entire text consisting of the Devî's questions and the answer of Sadâṣhiva. From these texts the right thinking will readily understand how difficult it is to become a healer without killing thousands.[1]

In the fourteenth Ullâsa of this Tantra,[2] after Mahâdeva had spoken of the rules and ritual relating to the consecration of the images of Devas, Devî said :

" Lord, tell me truly what devotees should do if, for some unforeseen reason, the consecrated image of a Devata is left without worship. Tell me also through what faults images of Devas become unfit for worship, for what faults they should be rejected, and what means exist for remedying those faults."

Sadâṣhiva said :

" If there be an omission to worship for a day, then the worship should be twice performed ; if for two days, then the worship should be four times performed ; if for three days it should be celebrated eight times. If the omission does not exceed six months then the Deva should be bathed with eight jars full of water, sanctified by His

[1] That is to say, without having had experience at the cost of others.
[2] Verse 95 *et seq.*

mantra, and then worshipped. If the omission to perform worship exceeds six months, then the image should again be consecrated and then worshipped. If the image of a Deva is defective, cracks, or breaks, it should be consigned to water. If it has fallen on unholy ground it should not be worshipped. A defective, cracked, or broken image should be consigned to water, but an image polluted by touch should be purified and then again worshipped. Mahâpîthas[1] and Anâdilingas[2] are free from all faults—that is to say, the above-mentioned causes do not operate on them to detract from their virtue. For this reason the people should worship their own Ishṭadevas[3] in them for the attainment of their desired blessings.[4] Mahâmâyâ, I have thus related to you in detail all that you wished to know for the good of men who act with a view to the fruits of action."[5]

As He thus spoke the eye in the forehead of Bhagavân Mahâkâla opened as if to peer into futurity.

Nowadays one meets with many an adept in Tattva,[6] who professes to have renounced action, and says at every opportunity: "The karmakâṇḍa[7] is intended only for those who are devoid of knowledge; why then should he who has attained to it do action?"

Unfortunately, most of those who say this are

[1] Holy shrines where the body of Devî as Satî fell to earth (see Introduction).

[2] Anâdi, without beginning. That is, those lingams which spring from earth supernaturally (called Svâyambhû, or self-existent), as distinguished from those fashioned and installed by men. Of the former class are the lingams at Vaidyanâtha, Târakeṣhvara, the Chandrashekhara at Chittagong and other places.

[3] The worshipper's own chosen Deity.

[4] Dharma, Artha, Kâma, Moksha (see Introduction).

[5] That is, those on the path of pravritti (see Introduction), who act interestedly (sâkâma karma), as opposed to those who renounce, and who act rightly and unselfishly without thought of gaining fruit of their action (nishkâma karma).

[6] Sacred science.

[7] The portion of the scripture which relates to worship, ritual practice (karma), which last word means that which is done, action.

themselves doers of karma.[1] What they therefore say must mean that such karma alone as consists in the worship of Devas is for those who are devoid of true knowledge; while such karma as is required for the service of wife, children, and the like may be done even by those possessed of true knowledge. For their Ṣhâstra says: "It is also by doing what pleases Him that He is worshipped." However that may be, it was as if He thought of what would happen in the future that Bhagavân, who dwells in the hearts of all wise men, said again[2]: "No Jîva possessing body can be without karma for even half a minute. Helpless he is drawn by the current of karma even against his will. That is to say, just as everything follows the wind, which it is unable to check, so everyone follows the irresistible flow of karma. By karma[3] alone Jîva enjoys happiness, by karma alone he suffers misery. Under the influence of karma alone he is born, lives, and dies. For this reason I have made mention of various kinds of karma in sâdhanayoga, in order to attract the minds of those of little knowledge to nirvâṇadharma[4]—that is to say, in order to induce them to work until they reach the stage which follows nirvikalpa samâdhi,[5] and to keep them away from wrong action (that is to say, if the mind remains ever engaged in the thought of good things, no bad thoughts can germinate in it)."

Sadâshiva next proceeded to explain the subject of karma with more explicitness[6]: "Karma is of two kinds, auspicious and inauspicious. Through the latter Jîva suffers acute pain, and, O Devî! through the former Jîva becomes attached to the fruits of action, and controlled by the bonds of karma, sojourns again and again in this

[1] See note 6, p. 202.
[2] Verse 104 *et seq.* of chap. xiv. of the Mahânirvâṇa Tantra.
[3] See p. 202.
[4] That is, to the path which leads to liberation.
[5] See Introduction.
[6] Mahânirvâṇa Tantra, chap. xiv., verse 107

world and the next." That is to say, you must correct your notion of a twofold bond of karma to the effect that karma consisting of worship of Devas and Devîs is the cause of bondage, whilst that done in the service of the world removes bondage; and you must understand that whatever you do is karma, that what is good karma is auspicious, and what is bad karma is inauspicious, and that both auspicious and inauspicious karma are instrumental in causing the bondage of Jîva to sangsâra.

"Not even in a hundred kalpas[1] can Jîva attain liberation unless both his auspicious as well as inauspicious karma come to an end"—that is to say, as good karma will come to an end so will bad karma come to an end with it; otherwise, if all your good karma pass away, leaving the flow of your bad karma the same or gradually increasing, such a destruction of karma will not remove bondage to sangsâra. Rather the want of good karma will break the tie with Heaven and make that with Hell yet firmer still through the influence of bad karma. "As it makes no difference to the binding power of a chain whether it be of iron or gold, so karma, whether auspicious or inauspicious, is equally powerful to bind Jîva."[2] Accumulated karma, whether good or bad, inevitably acts so as to bring the Jîva back to sangsâra. "Jîva, even though he be in constant action and endure hundreds of austerities, cannot attain liberation so long as he does not acquire true knowledge[3]"—that is to say, if knowledge is not sought as the accompaniment of action the latter alone can never be directly instrumental to secure liberation. "It is only after the destruction of sin and the purification of the heart by thought upon Tattva (the thought that Brahman alone in an essential sense exists, while the world does not—that is to say, that the world is nothing but a display[4] of the Brahman) and by performance of

[1] See p. 134, note 2.

[2] Mahânirvâṇa Tantra, chapter xiv., verses 109, 110.

[3] *Ibid.*, verse 111.

[4] Vibhûti, see p. 242, note 2.

disinterested action[1] that knowledge dawns[2]"—that is to say, that knowledge only appears when the mind has been so purified by the practice of Brahma-Tattva and constant worship of Bhagavân with karma performed without desire for fruit, that no sinful propensity arises in it, but only the presence of the pure sattva guṇa is felt without the least appearance of the rajas and tamas guṇas.

"From Brahmâ to a blade of grass everything in the world is the creation of mâyâ. Parabrahman alone is the sole truly existent one. When knowledge of this tattva is gained then the Jîva attains true happiness[3]"—that is to say, whatever variety we see in the dualistic world, is like a dream or a magic show, the creation of mâyâ. Just as the magician alone truly exists and all which he does is illusion, so the nondual Parabrahman alone is true and all the things raised by Him to form the sangsâra are illusive. Just as when sleep is dispelled all dreams disappear, so when, by the grace of Bhagavân, the sleep of mâyâ is dispelled, this sangsâra, full of mâyâ, disappears at the same time. As when Jîva awakes he sees that he alone and neither sleep nor dream remains, so when Jîva becomes self-conscious he sees that neither mâyâ nor the sangsâra remains, but only he himself as the Supreme Spirit.[4] It is only when Jîva thus sinks into the sea of Tattva[5] that he gains such happiness as never gives place to sorrow.

"He alone is free from the bonds of karma who, renouncing name and form, has attained to the knowledge that on the immutable Brahman all things[6] rest."[7] One must rise above name and form and make all things[6] rest in the true immutable Brahman. From this it must

[1] That is, nishkâma karma (opposed to sakâma karma), or right action done unselfishly without hope of reward and simply because such action is right.

[2] Mahânirvâṇa Tantra, chap. xiv., verse 112.

[3] *Ibid.*, verse 113. Brahmâ is the first Deva of the Trinity, a transitory manifestation of the supreme Brahman.

[4] Paramâtmâ. [5] Here the infinite waters of the ocean of Brahman.

[6] *Lit.* "all Tattva rest." [7] Mahânirvâṇa Tantra, *ibid.*, verse 114.

be understood that if Brahman is true and immutable, names and forms are false and mutable. What is true is stable and what is false is unstable, so that to reach the true the false must be abandoned. To sink in Brahmatattva, which is above mâyâ, names and forms which are made of mâyâ must be abandoned. By name and form we must understand not true name and form, but the name and form which arises from change of nature.[1] For instance, the true name of earth is earth. Its form is the ordinary ground. When, however, cups, jugs, pots, dishes, and other like things, are made of it, the names and forms of those articles are due to nothing but change—that is to say, had not the true form of earth been transformed into the changed forms of cups, and the like, the substance earth would never have received the names of cups jars, and the like. When these break and return to the form of common earth those names also disappear along with those forms. Cups, jars, and the like, are all false ; earth alone is true. Just as in understanding the nature[2] of earth I cannot leave out of consideration cups, and the like, so in directing the mind to the nature[2] of Brahma I must not omit to consider the Brahmâṇḍa consisting of names and forms. It was earth before the formation of cups, and subsequently it again became earth. Only for a short time between these two states the cry of " Cup, cup !" arose, which alone is to be considered false. Ṣhâstra has therefore said : " If a thing which did not exist either before or afterwards appears to exist during a middle period, know it also to be false." This falsehood, again, is not fundamentally false. A thing seen in a dream may be false, but neither dream nor sleep is false. Similarly, this world may be false, but the mâyâ at its root is never false. If sleep be false, who shows the dream ? If mâyâ be false, who creates the sangsâra ? If mâyâ be false, then the sangsâra becomes true. Mâyâ

[1] Vikâra : change of form or nature ; transformation ; deviation from natural state. In Sângkhya, Vikṛiti is that which is evolved from a previous source or Prakṛiti.

[2] Tattva.

therefore, exists and will exist, and it is through this mâyâ that mother Mahâmâyâ must be seen.

Gîtânjali[1] therefore sings :

" Veda says : vain is our effort, for everything,
O Brother ! is Mâyâ.
Tantra says through Mâyâ is heard the laugh of Mahâmâyâ;
For it is the Mother's Mâyâ."

Veda says : " Whatever is designated by speech and called by name is Vikâra.[2] Only earth is true."[3] Vikâra is not false ; it is only the state of change of that which is real. A changed thing is only the real thing in another state ; it is only the changed name and form which appear and disappear. The true form has neither appearance nor disappearance. Just as cups, jars, dishes, or whatever else you may make with earth will undoubtedly remain earth in substance ; as wrist-chains, bracelets, earrings, or whatever else you may make with gold will be gold in substance and nothing else, so in this dualistic world, with all its variety of names and forms, father, mother, brother, sister, wife, son, daughter, you and I, non-moving and moving things, insects, flies, and the other names and forms which we see, are all only the Para-brahman manifesting Itself in different forms, such forms being due to change by Mâyâ, and in reality nothing but a manifestation of Brahman.[4] The only distinction is that in the body of Ishvara this power of manifestation[3] is fully manifested, whilst in the body of Jîva it is not so. I therefore said that because changed names and forms are false, the true names and forms are not so.

In the domain of Sâdhana this is Brahma-vision. Gîtânjali[1] has therefore put into the mouth of Menakâ :

" Umâ is the adored of the world ;
No mere daughter is She.
With Brahman as Hara, on a bejewelled throne,

[1] A volume of verses by the Author. [2] See last page, note 1.
[3] Referring to the simile of a ghata (jar). What is called jar is untrue; but the earth of which it is composed is true.
[4] Brahmavibhûti.

She sits as Parabrahmasanâtanî.[1]
Thy Tripurasundara Digambara[2] exists,
Far excelling in lustre ten million suns.
On the left of Hara sits my Umâ,
Whose golden beauty shines as a thousand million moons.
There laughs Shaḍânana,[3] in Sadânanda's[2] arms;
Gajânana[4] dances in Jagadambâ's[5] arms,
The Music of Ṣhambhu's damvura[6]
Draws peals of laughter from Kumâra[7]
And from Gaṇeṣha, at the clap of Umâ's hands.
In the arms of two Brahmas[8] rest the two Brahma-children,[9]
And you and I again are Brahmas father and mother.
This sangsâra instinct, with Brahma-bliss, is but a Vikâra[10] of Brahman,
And thus my perfect Brahman is His charming spouse.
O Mountain! I hear another strange thing—
Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Hara are Umâ's sons;
Umâ is not thine and mine alone.
She exists as everything moving or immovable in the Universe.
Grandfather says She is grandmother
Who gave birth to Pîtâmvara[11] and Digambara.[12]
Upon hearing you and me call her 'daughter'
How She must laugh in her mind!
Being thus ashamed and afraid to call Her daughter,
The Queen (Menakâ) may well call herself the daughter's daughter.
But that daughter is not daughter to the Queen alone.
If entreated She becomes even the daughter of a beggar-woman; Shiva Chandra says, O Lady of the Mountain! (Menakâ)

1 Devî as the eternal Parabrahman. 2 Ṣhiva.
3 The six-headed Kârtikeya, son of Ṣhiva.
4 Elephant-headed Gaṇeṣha. 5 The Devî. 6 Ṣhiva's drum.
7 Kârtikeya, *vide ante*. 8 Devî and Ṣhiva. 9 Kârtika and Gaṇeṣha.
10 *Vide ante*, p. 206. 11 Vishṇu, who, as Kṛishṇa, wears yellow cloth.
12 Ṣhiva, who is naked.

Why, now that you know all, do you still call Her
daughter ?
Be yourself daughter for once.
And offering Jabâ flowers to the daughter's lotus feet,
Cry : ' Victory to Mother !' "[1]

One must rise above names and forms and make all things[2] rest on the immutable Brahma. In order to rise above written names and forms discrimination[3] is necessary. Discrimination[3] is nothing but the understanding of the true nature of things. In discussing the fundamental nature of name and form the whole attention must be directed to the Parabrahman, just as in discussing the question of the substance of a cup the attention is directed to the earth (of which it is made). But because you must use names and forms this does not mean that you must leave this Brahmâṇḍa, with its names and forms, and go to live in another Brahmâṇḍa. Judge as you are, your name and form will accompany you to whatever Brahmâṇḍa you may go. One cannot, therefore, discuss name and form by throwing off name and form altogether. Just as the true nature of light would not be known were it not for the existence of darkness, so the non-dualistic existence[2] cannot be known without the existence of this dualistic Brahmâṇḍa composed of names and forms. Without it there could have been no judge of dualism and non-dualism, nor indeed any necessity for such a judge. To understand the true nature of earth it is not necessary to go to a country where there are no pots and potters. A person of intelligence will place a pot before himself, and see that under its form there is really nothing but earth. He who has recognized this is not astonished at the sight of a pot, but is, on the contrary, pleased to see the wonderful capacity which earth possesses of taking

[1] The gist of these verses is that Parvatî and Shiva are not merely the daughter and son-in-law of the Lord of Mountains and Menakâ, but are the one Supreme Spirit, manifesting as, and dwelling in, all forms.
[2] Tattva.
[3] Viveka.

on forms. Similarly, he who has mastered the Brahma-tattva[1] is not astonished at the sight of this created universe, but is, on the contrary, overjoyed to see the eternal ṣhakti of Brahmamayî. He forgets all names and forms and sees in every form the Brahma-form underlying the worldly form. As everyone sees that there are pots, but the wise alone know that there is nothing but earth, so, although all see the sangsâra full of wives, sons, and relations, the Tântrik sâdhaka alone knows that it is nothing but Brahmamayî's self. He who has understood that in order to rise above name and form it is necessary to forget that things have distinctive properties giving rise to such names and forms, and to know that the true ṣhakti of Brahma alone exists, he alone has risen above name and form and has perceived that all is but the immutable Brahman.

"No amount of japa, homa, and fasting will give liberation. It is by the realization alone that 'I am indeed Brahman,' that Jîva will gain liberation."

As the mind of a drunken or deeply slumbering man is not affected even if he is embraced by a young woman, so self-realization or perception of the real does not come to one who is intoxicated with an intense delusion[2] and is under the influence of the sleep of mâyâ, even should he be animated by Sâdhana. If Japa, Homa, Vrata,[3] and fasts are not accompanied by self-knowledge they avail nothing, even though they be practised for an hundred years. It is not, however, meant that all japa, homa, etc., is ineffectual to gain liberation. For why, then, should it be necessary to state that (under certain conditions) they are so ineffectual? As a matter of fact, japa, homa, fasting are so many means of attaining self-knowledge. Shâstra has consequently said that liberation will not be gained even after a hundred years by the mere performance of the ordinary karma,[4] if there be complete

[1] *I.e.*, who knows that all, whatever may be its varied appearance, is but the one Brahman.
[2] Moha.
[3] See Introduction.
[4] Ritual acts.

disregard for what is fundamental—namely, self-knowledge. Shâstra does not mean that one who has known the self[1] has no karma to perform; it rather means that none but those who know the self have a right to perform karma.

Âtmâ[2] is witness[3] (that is, It only looks upon the working of the universe caused by mâyâ without interest therein) and is omnipresent, perfect, true, without a second and higher than the highest. (Like the space in a room.)[4] Âtmâ possesses, yet does not possess, body (that is, although Âtmâ inhabits the body, it remains ever detached from its qualities). Jîva attains liberation when he realizes this truth. He is without a doubt liberated who has cast off all idea of name and form as mere child's play and has become solely devoted to the Brahman.

During play children think of their dolls as sons and daughters; but their names and forms disappear when play is over. In the same way, however much you may build in your own mind names and forms by the establishment of relationships, whether by way of wife, son, father, and mother, with jîvas who are the mâyâ-dolls in the playground of this sangsâra, know it for certain that with the end of your earthly life all such names and forms will disappear. Therefore, he who has ceased from play and cast aside all mâyik[5] names and forms while there is yet time, and who, setting his mind and Âtmâ on the Parabrahman who is above mâyâ, has united himself with the Paramâtmâ, such an one, even though inhabiting the mâyik[5] body, is undoubtedly eternally free, like the Brahman Itself.

"If images imagined in the mind could give liberation to Jîva, then one could also become a King by receiving a kingdom in dream."

[1] Presumably the author here and in next line refers to the stages prior to complete self-recognition—viz., regard for and endeavour to obtain self-knowledge.

[2] The Spirit.

[3] And so it is said: "Âtmâ sâkshî chetah kevalo nirguṇashcha" (Âtmâ is the sole intelligent witness without attributes). To its endurance as permanent witness of all changing states is due the Kantian "synthetic unity of apperception."

[4] That is, space has no form itself but takes form from the room in which it is.

[5] Made of and by Mâyâ.

As, despite his mâyik body, Jîva may obtain freedom from birth by knowledge of the essential truth,[1] the perception of the truth of the Self being the sole cause of such freedom, so a Sâdhaka may attain nirvâṇa kaivalya by the worship (with knowledge of the Self) of an image of Jagadambâ in the form in which She appeared in mâyâ for the benefit of Her devotees, and by perception of the greatness of that image—that is, of the presence in it, in eternal forms, of the eternal ṣhakti of Her who is eternity itself. This is the sole cause of such nirvâṇa kaivalya.[2]

He,[3] who with loins girt with yellow cloth, sat as Pârtha's[4] charioteer, glorious with the glory of his devotee, on the seat of Arjuna's chariot as the Pâṇḍavas' friend, holding the reins of the white horses in his left, and a whip in the right, hand; He, who but a moment before, finding his friend Arjuna overcome by impatience and delusion,[5] and unwilling to do his own dharma,[6] had counselled him in words of wisdom; He, in the twinkling of an eye, changed that form of His—that sweet form of a delicate, dark hue, like that of a freshly formed cloud, charming the minds and hearts of the whole world, and disappeared, and in the twinkling of an eye thousands of hands and feet of the universe-embracing great body extended to each of the ten quarters of the heavens, and a terrible mass of light, issuing from thousands of widely-expanded eyes, dimmed the rays of the sun. Notwithstanding his endowment of divine vision, that Prince of Heroes, Arjuna, shook with fear, and with trembling voice and folded hands said: "I cannot see the quarters of space nor am I at ease. Have mercy, O Lord of Devas! in whom the world resides."

In Vali's[7] Yajna[8] heaven, earth, and the nether world

[1] Tattva. [2] Supreme liberation (see Introduction).
[3] Ṣhrî Kṛishṇa. [4] Arjuna. [5] Mâyâ and Moha. [6] Duty.
[7] Vali was a Daitya grandson of Prahlâda, who conquered the three worlds and then performed a great yajna, in which he intended to give away all that belonged to him, when Vishṇu as Vâmana appeared before him and asked for land sufficient to put three feet on. This was promised, when the Vâmana with two feet covered the world. [8] Sacrifice.

were covered by the two feet of the Vâmana Brâhmaṇa.[1] By Vali's good fortune a third foot, hitherto unseen by even Brahmâ and the other Devas, shot out from Bhagavân's navel, through the wonderful ṣhakti of the Almighty. Advised by his Queen, who was learned in spiritual lore, King Vali bowed down, and then the foot, the dispeller of fear and the wealth of devotees, was placed on his head. The fortunate King Vali went to the nether world, and Bhagavân, the reliever of the burdens of the world, abandoned even Vaikuṇṭha, and Himself became Vali's door-keeper in the nether world. To-day, only if he permits and kindly opens the door, can one see King Vali. The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha,[2] the monarch of monarchs, Himself stands at Vali's door, though at His own door of Vaikuṇṭha Brahmâ and other Devas ever remain standing, praying for admittance to His presence, the all in all of a devotee's life. Bhagavân, the creator of all things, Thou alone, O Lord! knowest the greatness of a devotee. And you, King Vali, a Prince of Daityas,[3] are a Prince of Devotees. What kingdom is it which you have acquired, to guard which the Supreme Monarch of the universe has Himself become your door-keeper?

Again, on the banks of the Yamunâ, at the root of the kadamba-tree, the sweet flute[4] sounded. By what mantra of what secret sâdhana we know not, the fair women of the city of Vraja stood in their thousands in the ecstasy of their great love,[5] surrounding Bhagavân, the son of Nanda, as immovable stars surround the full moon. Instantly, by virtue of his wonderful vaishṇavî mâyâ, Bhagavân appeared to each of them in a separate body, and threw his arms round the neck of each of the fair women, unseen by the others. The Devas assembled in the sky above Vrindâvana in order to see the incomparable beauty of the body of Kṛishṇa in the waters of the Yamunâ, on land and in space. Amidst showers

[1] The Vishṇu avatâra of that name—as dwarf. [2] Vishṇu's heaven. [3] Demonic beings. [4] Of Ṣhri Kṛishṇa. [5] Râsa.

of flowers offered by them with reverence, to the joyous sounds of music and dancing by Vidyâdharas, Siddhas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Apsarâs, Yakshas, and Châraṇas,[1] to the song of triumph by the herdswomen, and amidst the manifestation of the perfect greatness of Pûrṇa Brahmasanâtana,[2] the huge waves of the heroic valour of the charmer of Madana[3] rolled in the sea of the play of love.[4]

The sight of the misery of Devas, caused by the oppressions of Mahisha the Asura, pained the loving heart of Her who is full of mercy for all sufferers. She, who embodies all ṣhaktis, manifested Her ṣhakti and appeared in the form of a mass of fury born of the anger of the Devas. The earth sank under the weight of the beauteous lotus feet of that form, all full of consciousness of Her who is consciousness itself. Her crown pierced the firmament, and, delighting in war, She stood extending Her thousand arms over the field of battle. Seeing the Brahman aspect of the Brahmamayî, the immortals shouted : " Victory ! victory ! victory !" and in joy began to worship the lotus feet of the blissful Devî.

Again, when previous to the destruction of Ṣhumbha and Niṣhumbha,[5] Kauṣhikî[6] emerged from the body of Pârvatî, beautiful as a golden champak flower, the fair appearance of Pârvatî became instantly changed into the shining blue lustre, more beautiful than that of a blue lotus, of Umâ, who appeared as Ṣhyâmâ. Into the glowing fire of Her presence the King of the Daityas jumped and was thereupon consumed as if he were a mere insect. Again, in the battle with Chaṇḍa and Muṇḍa,[5] the ṣhakti of Châmuṇḍâ[6] burst forth from the forehead of Ṣhyâmâ, wrinkled with wrath. In the battle with Raktabîja,[5] Ṣhivadûtî[7] issued from Ṣhyâmâ, who

[1] Various forms of celestial male and female spirits (Devayoni).

[2] The full eternal Brahman.

[3] The Deva of love.

[4] The passage refers to the râsalîlâ play of love of Ṣhrî Kṛishṇa and the Gopîs.

[5] Demons (see the Devî-Mâhâtmya).

[6] A terrific form of the Devî.

[7] A Ṣhakti issuing from Ṣhyâmâ

is Mulaprakṛiti. In the fight with Ṣhumbha it was into Her body that Brahmâṇî and other Ṣhaktis suddenly disappeared. Prior to Daksha's yajna[1] ten Mahâvidyâs appeared from out of the single body of Satî and again disappeared into it. Again, at the time of the destruction of that yajna, a shadow-Satî[2] appeared from out of the original body of Satî, and the mâyik body was abandoned into the fire of yajna. Later, in the home of Himâlaya, he was shown the world-form manifestation of Brahman in the newly-born body of a daughter,[3] and into that body again those manifestations were withdrawn.

The appearance and disappearance in this manner of innumerable playful bodies from and into Her single body clearly proves that the body of Sachchidânandamayî[4] is nothing but Sachchidânanda; that the variety in forms is due to variety in mâyâ made by Her own desire, and that there is no means of specifying any of Her particular forms as being Her real form truly defined by unquestionable signs. From the One comes the infinite, which becomes One again by the disappearance of the infinite. In this manner, in Her body, in the twinkling of an eye, there is creation, and in another twinkling a dissolution.[5] In this state of things to endeavour to ascertain the forms of Her who is co-extensive with the universe is but the counting of the waves of the sea. Again, in the hearts of Sâdhakas who have attained Siddhi She appears and disappears eternally in infinite forms, such forms changing at every moment; this being so, it is impossible to say that She is in reality bound to any one particular form. To know, therefore, the truth[6] as to Her form, we must

[1] See Introduction and *ante*.

[2] Chhâyâsatî.

[3] Devî incarnating as Pârvatî.

[4] The Devî as existence, knowledge, and bliss. Sachchidânanda is the Brahman.

[5] So in the Lalitâ Sahasranâma (verse 66), it is said: "Unmeshanimishotpannavipannabhuvanâvalih" (The series of worlds arise and disappear with the opening and shutting of Her eyes).

[6] Tattva.

understand that Her real Self is above all forms. Though connected with infinite forms, She is, in fact, unattached to any form. Whenever the Ichchâmayî[1] puts forth any form of mâyâ according to Her desire, then a reflection appears of the form which She willingly assumes. Seeing that reflection in the mirror of mâyâ She becomes charmed with Her own form and, like an enchanted girl, the Ânandamayî[2] dances with joy and claps Her hands. In the establishment of a dual relationship between Jîva and Brahman She dances in Her own joy, into which She sinks.

Overwhelmed with emotion at this play of Hers, a Sâdhaka has said :

" Kâlî, Charmer, of the mind of Mahâkâla, Thou who art ever full of bliss, Thou danceth in Thy own joy, O Mother ! and Thyself dost clap Thy hands."

He who, when practising Sâdhana of the Brahma-forms of the Brahmamayî, does not possess this knowledge concerning the Brahman is not, in fact, competent to worship Her forms. Whenever, during creation, preservation, and destruction, a necessity has arisen for any particular form She who is will itself has entered into that form, and when Her purpose has been served, that mâyik form has at once disappeared. The forms, however, with which the eternal flow of the universe is eternally concerned and in which the three principles[3] of creation, preservation, and destruction are contained are ever true and eternal. As they are eternal before creation, so they are eternal after the great dissolution ; for the Shâstra has said that such eternal forms are resident in the non-dualistic region unknown to this ephemeral mâyik world.[4]

Veda has said :

" Just as one fire in entering into the womb of earth assumes in every object its form, so the one Dweller in all objects assumes their forms."

[1] The Devî whose substance is will.

[2] The Devî whose substance is bliss.

[3] Tattva.

[4] That is, the forms referred to exist in potential state, otherwise there could be no re-creation after dissolution.

Fire exists in a subtle form in every object in this world composed of the five elements; but from without it is not at all visible. If, however, there is friction by mutual contact, or fire from without touches it, the fire burns forth. It is the law of nature that what does not exist in a thing can never appear in it. Had not fire existed in a subtle form in everything in the world, all things would not have been combustible. We must therefore understand that fire exists eternally in the subtlest form in every atom of any object, and that it also exists in a subtle form in the gross body of any object (which is but a conglomeration of atoms), permeating every part of it. For this reason the body of a piece of wood composed of the five elements should also be considered as the body of one of those elements—namely, fire. Similarly, Paramâtmâ,[1] which dwells in all things, enters and exists throughout the body of the universe.[2] Tantra has therefore said that he cannot worship images who is ignorant of the spiritual knowledge that "She exists as ṣhakti in even vehicles, stones, and metals." Again, Ṣhrîmadbhâgavata has said images are of eight kinds—namely, those made of stone, wood, iron, vermilion, sandal paste, etc.; painted, made of sand, jewels, and mental. "At the time of worship a sâdhaka first of all worships the mental image inwardly,[3] and then, after communicating the spirit[4] of Brahman within him to the image without, commences external worship. Again, those who worship yantras[5] without an image, worship the mental image of the Devatâ. This is the fundamental principle[6] relating to Her eternal presence and manifestation in yantras and images. For those who do not understand Her omnipresence and this communication of the inward spirit, but merely think to

[1] The Supreme Spirit.

[2] The Brahman is in, though also beyond, the Brahmâṇḍa.

[3] Literally, "in inward yajna," as to which see Introduction and last chapter, vol. ii.

[4] Tejas—light, force, brilliance, spirit.

[5] See Introduction.

[6] Tattva, or truths.

attain liberation by the simple imagination of a form in their minds, such liberation is but a dream." Ṣhâstra has therefore said:

"If the mere imagination of forms in the mind, without spiritual knowledge and sâdhana, can secure liberation, then people can also become Kings by receiving kingdoms in dreams."

Along with the contemplation of images the entire fundamental truth concerning them must be understood. When this is understood it must be realized,[1] and then the spirit must be communicated to the external image, when the process of giving it life will have been accomplished.[2] It is only when in this manner the Devatâ has been established that the lustre of consciousness of Chaitanyamayî[3] will burst through that earthly image and scatter its rays around, illuminating the heart of the Sâdhaka, filling him with joy and liberating his soul from physical existence. The Sâdhaka will find this subject[4] dealt with in greater detail in the Chapter on ordinary worship.

Preserving the former ṣhloka,[5] in the form of a sûtra,[6] Bhagavân Himself has explained it in the form of a clear vṛitti:[7]

"Without knowledge men cannot attain liberation, even though they practise severe austerities with the full belief that images made of earth, metals, wood, and the like are Îṣhvara Himself."

Ritual action[8] is futile if, in performing it, one is ignorant of the supreme Truth which is to destroy the

[1] Literally, "made Pratyaksha." There are four kinds of proof, according to Nyâya, and three according to Sângkhya. The latter are: (1) Pratyaksha, or direct perception by the mind and senses of sight, smell, touch, taste, and sound; (2) anumânam, or inference; (3) shabdapramâṇam, or scriptural proof; to which the Nyâya adds (4) upamâna—that is, analogy or recognition of likeness.

[2] That is, the prâṇapratishṭhâ rite (see Introduction).

[3] The Devî Whose substance is consciousness.

[4] Tattva.

[5] Verse.

[6] Aphorism.

[7] A form of commentary.

[8] Karma.

bonds arising from action. If I do not know by what process this earthen image which I worship is changed into an image full of consciousness, then my image worship is nothing but earth worship. Ṣhastra has therefore said that without knowledge no amount of severe austerities will enable one to see the True Form of Her who is the embodiment of all spiritual and intellectual knowledge. It is the sight of Her alone which frees one of bondage. He who is devoid of such knowledge is therefore not qualified to worship images. Without knowledge neither asceticism[1] nor enjoyment of worldly pleasure can give liberation.

To illustrate this, Bhagavân has said:

"If performance of Karma[2] alone, without knowledge of the Brahman, can give liberation, then those who by fasting have reduced themselves to skeletons, and those who, through gluttony, have become big-bellied, can gain liberation by such abstinence and indulgence. But in truth are they really liberated?" "If the mere performance of a vow to live on air, grass, broken particles of rice, or water alone can give liberation, then serpents, beasts, birds, and animals of the waters also (who live on such things) can be liberated (in spite of the absence of knowledge)."

There are four different forms of worship called "states" or "dispositions,"[3] according to four different states of knowledge. These are: "Seeing the Brahman in all things; this is the highest form.[4] Constant contemplation[5] of the Devatâ in the heart is the middle form. Recitation of mantras[6] and saying of hymns[7] is the lowest form, and mere external worship[8] is lower than these."

"Perception of the identity of Jîvâtmâ and Paramâtmâ is Brahmabhâva. Concentration of mind on the Devatâ by the process of yoga is dhyanabhâva. Pûjâ is the

[1] Tapasyâ.
[2] Ritual action, austerities, alms-giving, and action generally, etc.
[3] Bhâva. [4] *Ibid.* [5] Dhyâna (see Introduction).
[6] Japa, v. *ibid.* [7] Stava. [8] Pûjâ.

bhâva which arises out of the dualistic idea of the servant and the Lord, the worshipper and the worshipped. But he who knows that all is Brahman needs neither yoga nor pûjâ, because his competency is such that he has risen above both the bhâvas of yoga and pûjâ. For him there is neither worshipper nor worshipped, but all is Brahman. In his sight Jîva and Brahman Îṣhvara and Sâdhaka are not different things. Where there is no difference between two things there can be no yoga, nor worship of the one by the other. For this reason, hymn, recitation of mantra, contemplation, concentration, vows, restraint,[1] and the like, are not for those[2] who know the Brahman. "For him in whose heart the highest knowledge, that of the Brahman, reigns, recitation, sacrifice, austerities, restraints, vows,[3] and the like are useless." They are not only useless for him, but he has not even the right to do ritual acts.

The Sâdhaka will now gradually see who is such a knower of Brahman. "The Brahman, who is the embodiment of pure knowledge and bliss, alone is true"—that is, without Him all this visible world is but the false display of mâyâ. "Whoever realizes this and becomes Brahman, for him there is no longer any necessity for external worship, contemplation, and concentration."[4]

"I am Jîva." The liberated Mahâpurusha whose heart is freed from the egoism involved in this saying has neither sin, nor piety, nor heaven,[5] nor rebirth. For him who has realized that all is Brahman there is neither subject for meditation nor person meditating, neither Jîva to meditate nor Îṣhvara on whom He may meditate. "This Âtmâ is always free and unattached to any objects. In what bondage can it be? Why, then, should men of perverted intellect demand its liberation?"[6]

1 Stava, japa, dhyâna, dhâraṇa, vrata, niyama (see Introduction).
2 Literally, "are beyond the adhikâra (competency)."
3 Japa, Yajna, Tapa, Niyama, Vrata (see Introduction).
4 Pûjâ, dhyâna, and dhâraṇa.
5 Svarga.
6 That is, the Âtmâ is ever free. It is the Buddhi which must be liberated from the bonds which obscure this actually existing freedom.

"The Universe is composed of His own mâyâ, and impenetrable even to the intellect of Devas. Âtmâ exists as one who has entered into it although in reality He does not enter into it."

"Just as space exists both inside and outside all things, so Âtmâ, whose substance is consciousness, shines as witness, both inside and outside all things."

"Âtmâ has neither birth, boyhood, youth, nor age. It is ever the same, incorruptible, and is consciousness."

"Birth, youth, age, and the like belong to the gross body alone. Âtmâ is free of them. Jivas whose intellect are obscured by mâyâ see this, but yet seem not to see this."

"Just as the one sun appears as many (when reflected) in the water contained in a vessel (although in reality the sun is one and not many), so in the water of mâyâ contained in the vessel of the jîva's gross body Âtmâ appears as many (although in reality it is one and not many)."

"As when the lunar orb is reflected in water a fool, who sees the quivering of the restless ripples, thinks that the lunar orb itself is quivering, so those who are destitute of true knowledge, on seeing the restlessness of intellect, think that the Âtmâ is restless."

"As when a cup is broken the space contained in it remains the same, so even when the body is destroyed Âtmâ remains the same."

"Devî, when jîva attains this supreme knowledge of the self which alone can give salvation, he is liberated even in this world. This is true, again true, and without a doubt true."

"Neither action,[1] nor charity, nor progeny[2] can bring liberation. Knowledge of the Âtmâ by the Âtmâ can alone give liberation to man."[3]

"Âtmâ is the dearest of all. There is nothing so dear as the Âtmâ. O consort of Ṣhiva! all other things (wife,

[1] Karma.

[2] That is, through their offering of the pinda in the obsequial rites.

[3] Only the Âtmâ can know Âtmâ.

son, and the like, etc.) become dear because of their relation to Âtmâ."

"Knowledge, object of knowledge, and knower—this threefold division is caused by mâyâ. If we carefully consider the nature[1] of these three, Âtmâ alone, which is knowledge, remains in the end."

"It is Âtmâ or consciousness who is knowledge, it is Âtmâ who is the object of knowledge, and it is Âtmâ who is the person who knows. He who knows this knows the truth."

"I have thus related to you the truth[2] about knowledge, the direct cause of nirvâṇa liberation. This is the highest treasure of the four classes of avadhûtas."[2]

The religious healers, of whom we have already spoken, quote the following four shlokas out of those above-mentioned as strong evidence in support of their theory that He is devoid of form :[3]

"He alone is free from the bonds of Karma who has risen above name and form and has made all principles and things rest on the true immutable Brahman." "He is undoubtedly liberated who has shaken off all notions of name and form as though they were child's play, and has solely devoted himself to Brahman." "If forms imagined in the mind can give salvation to Jîva, then men may also be Kings by receiving kingdoms in dreams." "Without knowledge men cannot attain liberation even though they practise severe austerities with the full belief that images made of earth, metals, wood, etc., are Îshvara Himself."

[1] Tattva.

[2] Those who have renounced the world ; ascetics. The life of the avadhûta is the Sannyasâshrama of the Kali Yuga (see Mahânirvâṇa Tantra, chap. viii., verse 2). The term has been defined as follows :

> "Aksharatvât vareṇyatvât dhûtasangsâravandhanât.
> tattvamasyârthasiddhatvâdavadhûtobhidhîyate."

(An avadhûta is so called on account of his being possessed of undecaying greatness, having washed off the bonds of sangsâra and learnt the meaning of (the great saying) "Thou art That.")

[3] Nirâkâravâda.

From the explanation which, along with those ṣhlokas, we have given of their meaning, supported by consideration of the context, conclusion, and object, sâdhakas will understand to what perversion of ṣhâstrik conclusions the wrong interpretations of present day interpreters, blinded by selfishness, lead. Ṣhâstra says that Jîva, before he can attain liberation, must forget the condition of Jîva subject to mâyâ, assumed by Brahman in the mâyâ-built Brahmâṇḍa, and sink himself in the unity of Jîva and Brahman, which it is the purpose of all great sayings, such as " Thou art It," to establish. Jîva must rise above all names and forms which are the object of dualistic knowledge. According to our notion of this non-dualistic perception of the truth[1] we, whilst keeping intact the names and forms of our own selves and relatives and also of the whole world, consisting of moving and non-moving things, yet consider it to be the pith of the teaching that it is only the names and forms of Devatâs which are false and that these only should be abandoned. I fail to understand the necessity for such hurry in doing away with that particular name and form which alone will endure, whilst keeping those names and forms which will prove to be false. It is as though a great famine threatens the market of Brahma-jnâna[2]—a famine which will make all things so dear, that whatever purchase be now made will then be profitable. I do not want to deprive them of this profit. What I am sorry for is that the names and forms which constitute the bonds of sangsâra remain, whilst the names and forms which will cut those bonds is done away with. Hearing that the price of things will go on increasing our purchasers have been in such a hurry that they have forgotten to bring even the wherewithal to make purchases at the outset. Even He has been forgotten whose worship gives the fruit of the knowledge of Brahman. I know that they say : " For him whose

[1] Tattva. [2] Knowledge as to the Brahman.

nature has become Brahman[1] there is no longer any necessity for pûjâ, dhyâna, and dhâraṇa." We, too, do not deny this. Ṣhastra has said: "Whose nature." That is, the case of the man who, even without dhyâna and the like remains immersed in Brahma-bliss as naturally as he eats or sleeps. For one who has thus become Brahman or, in other words, whose condition of a Jîva has disappeared and been converted into Brahman; for him there is no longer any necessity for dhyâna, dhâraṇa, and pûjâ. But through our ill-fortune it has nowadays so happened that a number of persons who, by nature, are Brahma-ghosts,[2] have appeared who have neither dhyâna, nor dhâraṇâ, nor pûjâ, nor adoration. The words of the Ṣhâstra cannot be false. As a matter of fact, such self-willed people who pervert the true meaning of the Ṣhâstra have no right to dhyâna, dhâraṇâ, pûjâ, or japa. Consequently, these things do not exist so far as they are concerned. The four ṣhlokas on which they rely are preceded by the ṣhloka: "From Brahmâ to a blade of grass everything in the world is the creation of mâyâ, and Parabrahma alone is the sole truth. When this knowledge is attained Jîva attains liberation." The ṣhloka: "Âtmâ is witness, omnipresent, perfect, true, without a second and higher than the highest. Âtmâ possesses body and yet does not possess it. Jîva attains liberation when he realizes this truth," is in the midst of the ṣhlokas cited. The following ṣhloka follows them: "If, without knowledge of Brahman, performance of Karma alone can give liberation, then such men as are reduced to skeletons by constant fasting, and such men as become big-bellied by excess of eating may be liberated through such abstinence and indulgence. But are they really liberated?" We fail, then, to understand how these

[1] Svabhâvât Brahmabhûta.

[2] The reference is to the sect of Brâhmos. There is here a pun on the term "bhûta," which, used as a suffix, means "state," and used independently means (among other things) "ghost."

four shlokas, can be put forward to prove that "Brahman cannot have any form," seeing that they relate to knowledge of Brahman. Shâstra, of course, says: "From Brahmâ to a blade of grass everything in the world is the creation of mâyâ, and Parabrahman alone is the sole truth," and we, too, do not deny this. But in the world, where everything from Brahmâ to a blade of grass is false, are you and I—advocates of the theories of Brahman possessing form, and Brahman being formless respectively—are we true? If this word "false" means non-existent, then you and I too do not exist. I admit that spiritually you and I do not exist, but because we admit it do we really feel it? Is it possible that such men as do feel it question whether Brahman possesses or does not possess form? Where you and I turn out false, where your "you-ness," and my "I-ness" disappear, two persons cannot exist. And where two do not exist, with whom can there be argument? Now, will the dualistic world become non-existent because you and I desire it to be so? Shâstra has said everything from Brahmâ to a blade of grass is false; but the question is, whether we have ever been able to make even a single blade of grass false as the Shâstra says? If we have not, why do we, who have not the power to do away with a blade of grass, presume to do away with Brahmâ? Do we feel ashamed even to think of this? Why, the very Shâstra which is invoked to do away with the existence of Devas and Devîs, who are Brahmâs with forms, that very Shâstra itself says: "From Brahmâ to a blade of grass." If Brahman does not take form, whence comes this Brahmâ? And if it is "from Brahman" instead of "from Brahmâ," then everything vanishes, and nothing remains as true.

Shastrâ is the command of Devatâ. For Jîvas it contains ordinances and teachings. Because it has said that the world is false you and I cannot beat time to that tune and dance. The speaker of Shâstra is Bhagavân,

who dwells in all things, and is above mâyâ. Its hearer is Maheshvarî. She who dwells in all things is turîya-chaitanya[1] incarnate, and governs universal mâyâ. To them, the falsity of the world is a matter of direct perception ; but to you and me it is Brahma-tattva,[2] attainable only by age-long Sâdhana, and beyond the reach of mind and speech. What the result of a battle will be is the concern of the King or Queen : the soldier's only duty is to start for war immediately on receiving an order to do so. The King and Queen know that in this war their victory is inevitable, so that in their conversation on the subject they can express satisfaction and joy. But if, on hearing this conversation, their soldiers were to think, " Since victory is inevitable what is the use of fighting ?" and were to give themselves up to rejoicing, it is most likely that the banner of triumph would fly in the dust. You say : " Mahâdeva has said that the world is false ; why, then, should I worship and adore names and forms ?" If, with this idea that the world is nothing but Brahman, Sâdhakas were to give up performing worship and ritual,[3] the kind of Brahma-knowledge which will be attained, and is, in fact, being nowadays attained, is not worth mentioning. Veda has said : " When everything in relation to a Jîva has been unified with Brahman what will he then see, what will he hear, what will he smell, etc., and with what ?" That is to say, where mind, intellect, body, senses, and everything else is Brahman, then worship and ritual[3] is impossible. It is of no use to see Brahman, to hear Brahman, etc., with Brahman. The author of Vedânta Paribhâshâ concludes : " Although the world is false, it is not false to those who are in the sangsâra." That is to say, a dream is not false when a person sees it. Had dreams been false when seen, why should we have cried with terror at the sight of tigers in dreams ? Ṣhruti, again, says, as the result of a spurious

1 As to the turîya state of consciousness, see Introduction and *ante*.

2 The truth concerning the Brahman.

3 Karma.

perception of a dualistic world, Jîva becomes instantly separated from Brahman and sees the world in a separate aspect." Philosophers have therefore said as follows: Although the notion that the body is the Self is spiritually false, it is yet deemed an established fact from the worldly point of view—that is to say, people consider the body to be the Self and say: "I have become thin, I have become fat, I have been cured, I am ill, etc.;" yet Âtmâ, which is nothing but existence, consciousness, and bliss, is neither thin nor fat, diseased nor cured, but is ever free from change or corruption, joy, sorrow, disease, grief, thinness, fatness, etc., which are conditions of the body alone. Just as people consider the body to be that Âtmâ, and consider all these conditions to be established facts in the worldly state, so the dualistic world, though in fact false, must yet, so long as Brahman is not perceived in all things, be considered as an established, separately-existing fact. We know that the sun always rises in the east; still, if we go to a new place, it appears that the sun is rising in the west, north, or south. Just as, in spite of knowing the truth in this matter and disbelieving the opposite, we become firmly convinced that that opposite itself is really true; just as this mistake in the matter of the direction of the sun's rising is inevitable, so this false perception of the dualistic world also is inevitable. We can not be asked as a favour to accept the dualistic world as an established fact. Until this dream of mâyâ is dispelled, until the bonds of Karma are destroyed, until the idea of difference between "you and me" disappears, Jîva cannot but have faith in this dualistic universe, call it false, a dream, or fancy, as you may. The influence of Karma, the force of action, will compel me, even against my own will, to believe in it. Just as a weak fish caught in a net in water can never pass outside the net, however much it may move about inside it, so the worldly Jîva caught in the mâyâ of the sangsâra can never sever the bonds of mâyâ and enter

into the unfathomable depth of Brahmatattva outside of mâyâ. Just as, in spite of being in water, the fish is prevented from moving out by the bondage of the net, so, in spite of being in the universe full of Brahman, Jîva is prevented by the bondage of mâyâ from entering freely into that Blissful Presence. Living in this dualistic world, you and I, mâyik Jîvas, are, therefore, bound to believe in it as a constant reality even against our will, although it is in fact not so.

Every worshipper is actuated by an earnest desire to know the nature[1] of his real self; but the existence of the desire does not bring about its fulfilment for all. It is for the accomplishment of this desire that sâdhana is required. Without sâdhana it can never be fulfilled. A child in the womb may, of course, form a desire to see its mother, but so long as it is in the womb it is impossible for it to do so. The desire can be fulfilled only for that child who has fortunately been safely born. Similarly, it is impossible for people living in Mahâmâyâ's mâyâ-womb of this universe to see that beautiful appearance of Hers which charms the heart of the conqueror of Death.[2] He who has, by the accumulation of religious merits in many births, been delivered from the sheath of the womb of mâyâ of the Mother of the Universe, he alone is a fit child to see the Brahma-form of the Brahmamayî. It is only such a child who truly has the right to suck that milk from the breast of Brahmamayî, which even Brahmâ and other Devas rarely obtain. He alone may share Her assuring lap with Kârtika and Gaṇeṣha. If, however, on seeing the pains of austere Sâdhana practised by any of Her children, the merciful Mother should gratify him; if She, who dwells in the heart of the Lord of Yogîs,[3] should rend the deep darkness of the black night[4] in Her womb by the mass of light issuing from Her black, cloudlike appearance, which dispels the fear of death

1 Tattva.
2 Mṛityunjaya, or Ṣhiva.
3 Mahâdeva; Ṣhiva.
4 Kâlaratri.

and Herself appear in the heart of the child lying in yoga in her womb; if She cuts the bonds of sangsâra mâyâ with the sharp edge of Her own mâyâ sword and takes the devoted sâdhaka up on Her lap—then also in such a case know that this is done as the inevitable fruit of much austere sâdhana practised in many previous births, and that none of these things have been accomplished without sâdhana. It is a domain which none can reach but through real sâdhana. Although the desire for going out may be strong, yet the door of the room in which Jîva is shut is not within his reach. The utmost that Jîva can do is to lie down on the bed of mâyâ and weep; but it is Mother alone who can open the door. Jîva can only weep loudly and awaken the Mother. By virtue of austere sâdhana the Sâdhaka can awaken Mother Kulakuṇḍalinî,[1] sleeping in the Mulâdhâra.[2] If She rises and opens the door of Brahmarandhra,[2] then alone may Jîva come forth; otherwise all worship and adoration are but a crying in the wilderness. The siddhi, which is attained in Sâdhana by the piercing of the six chakras,[3] is never attained by Jîva whilst he is crushed by the wheels of the Sangsâra.

Secondly, it is not within the province of Jîva to say whether Brahman has or has not name and form, and even if he speaks none will hear him, for the matter[4] is beyond the knowledge and intellectual perception of Jîva. Our belief and unbelief in this world are due merely to the fact that what we believe has been stated, and what we disbelieve has been denied, by a Ṣhâstra, which is revealed and not of human origin. The point is this: the very Ṣhâstra which says that Brahman has no name and no forms also says, "From Brahman to a blade of grass everything in the world is the creation of mâyâ." If the practical existence of a thing could be done away with by the mere statement that it is the creation of

[1] *Vide ante* and Introduction. [2] See Introduction.
[3] Shaṭchakrabheda (*vide ante* and Introduction). [4] Tattva.

mâyâ, why, then, does this world, consisting of moving and non-moving things, exist ?

The world is not a thing imperceptible to Jîva. If it is perfectly true that in the world created by mâyâ even a blade of grass can exist, we are unable to understand what it is which makes the existence of Brahmâ in it impossible. If, by a far-fetched interpretation,[1] it is said that the root word Brahman here does not refer to four-headed and red-coloured Brahmâ possessing a body, there is an end of the matter. If even formless and attributeless Brahman becomes the creation of mâyâ and, consequently, false along with a blade of grass, then what remains as the true Brahman ? To cut the branch of a tree on which one sits ; to do away with formless Brahman in endeavouring to dispense with Brahman possessing form is a Kâlîdâsa[2] kind of intelligence which will produce an inevitable fall for the interpreter. In this connection we have nothing to say but to give a warning. It is on the authority of that Shâstra we say that Brahmâ is included in the world, so that Brahmâ will exist so long as the world exists, or the world will exist so long as Brahmâ exists. As the world is not false to you and me, in spite of its being the creation of mâyâ, so Brahmâ and other Devâtas also are not false to Sâdhakas.

Thirdly, if, in spite of its being untenable according to reasoning, argument, and authority, we were to accept the interpretation of the followers of the theory that Îshvara is formless and to say that Brahman has really no name and form, then also there is no escape. If Brahman has no name and form, who is it, then, that says, " Brahman has no name and form " ? The speaker of the Mahânirvâṇa Tantra is Sadâṣhiva and the person spoken to is Âdyâṣhakti, both being the Brahman with

[1] Âdhyâtmik, in the sense of untrue.

[2] Kâlîdâsa, the great poet, is said to have been in his early years such a fool in practical matters as to have attempted to cut down the branch of a tree whilst sitting on it.

names and forms. Ṣhâstra says: "Maheṣhvara has introduced the Tantras by means of questions and answers, Himself taking the places both of Guru (teacher) and Ṣhishya (pupil")—that is to say, in Agama the Devî has put questions as disciple and Mahâdeva has answered them as guru, and in Nigama Mahâdeva Himself has asked questions as disciple, and the Devî has replied as Guru; or, in aspect inseparable from the Devî, the Deva Himself has, in both places, revealed the Tantras both as guru and pupil. If Brahman has no name and form, then this Deva and this Devî become false; and if the Deva and the Devî become false, how can the Tantra Ṣhâstra remain true? Tantra is the most glorious of all Ṣhâstras because it is the word of Mahâdeva and Mahâdevî. If to-day that Deva and Devî, the speakers of Tantra, turn out to be false, where then is the glory and authority of Tantra? If Tantra is not the command of Devatâ it may be easily explained away as the mistaken word of man and, consequently, unworthy of respect. No one will then bow his head to the authority of the Mahânirvâṇa Tantra. If the follower of the theory of Brahman possessing no form says that he does not believe that Brahman has name and form, the follower of the theory of Brahman possessing form will instantly reply that he has no faith in the authority of the Mahânirvâṇa Tantra. Thus all discussion and reasonings will cease, all interpretations will be useless, and all authorities and evidence will be of no value. I therefore say, where there is no means of defending one's own side, it is the height of folly to try to serve one's purpose by tricks.

Another thing. If in discussion a position of authority must be assigned to Ṣhâstra everything which is said in it should be accepted as correct. If a sâdhaka abandons the worship of images and takes to dhyâna and dhâraṇâ alone, then the mental image formed by him in his mind becomes the object of his dhyâna and adoration. If

an image imagined in the mind is supposed to be unable to give liberation, then there is no reason why dhyâna and dhâraṇâ [1] without image worship should give it, because in that dhyâna also the sâdhaka has to depend on a mental image. And if dhyâna does not bring liberation, then Devarshis, Maharshis, Râjarshis,[2] Yogîs, and Munîs[3] are mere fools, who waste their days in useless labour. Accomplished great sâdhakas also become deprived of siddhi. Moreover, why in that case should the Mahânirvâṇa Tantra have said : " The dhyânabhâva is the middle form of worship " ? Who says that only the four ṣhlokas of the Mahânirvâṇa Tantra, referred to above, are worthy of being considered as authority and the rest of the book, consisting of two voluminous parts—Uttarakhaṇḍa and Pûrvakhaṇḍa—is erroneous ? If this Tantra is correct, then the whole of it must be correct ; if incorrect, then the whole of it must be incorrect. What sort of impartial judgment is it to consider only four ṣhlokas which are to one's liking as correct and all the rest incorrect ? I take out four palmfuls of water from the Ganges and consider that small quantity of water as Brahmamayî Gangâ, who dwells in Brahmâ's Kamaṇḍalu,[4] and all the rest of the stream flowing in an irresistible current from the Himâlaya to the sea, as but ditch-water. What sort of faith is this ? The Mahânirvâṇa Tantra deals with Varṇâṣhrama,[5] Yugadharma,[6] Yogatattva,[7] the six Chakras,[8] politics, Vyâvahâra dharma,[9] Sâdhana dharma,[10] creation, preservation, and destruction, the divisions of the Brahmâṇḍa,[11] the fourteen worlds,[12] seven svargas,[12] and seven

1 Meditation and concentration of mind (see Introduction).

2 Classes of Ṛishis, or seers.

3 Adepts in yoga and sages.

4 A vessel carried by ascetics.

5 Caste system and rules.

6 The peculiar characteristics and Dharma of the different ages.

7 Science and art of Yoga.

8 Centres in the body which are dealt with in works on Tântrik yoga (see Introduction).

9 Law.

10 Rules relating to Sâdhana (see Introduction).

11 Universe.

12 See Introduction.

pâtâlas,[1] names, seats, and worships of Devas and Devis, the divya, vîra, and paṣhu forms of worship,[2] Mantras,[1] and Yantras,[1] of Devatâs, the consecration of temples and images, the various kinds of liberation[3], and with a whole mass of rules and regulations on various other subjects.

To consider the statements contained in the book on all these subjects to be incorrect with the exception of four ṣhlokas, and these only subject to a wrong and perverse interpretation, is not judgment but treachery, intense selfishness, lawlessness,[4] or the raving of a madman. Everywhere the Sâdhana dharma has been classified under the three distinct sections of Karma, Jnâna, and Bhakti, whether according to Tantra or Veda or Purâṇâ.[5] According to this system Bhagavân has, in the Mahânirvâṇa Tantra, given instructions in the Jnâna division after purification of the mind by performance of Karma. It is from these instructions, when handled by the senseless interpreters of the present day, that all this scepticism, by which nothing is gained but everything is lost, arises. Just as milk put into the mouth of a naturally venomous snake is turned into poison, so Ṣhâstra, handled by selfish persons who are naturally faithless, gives rise to such scepticism. As a matter of fact, it is not the case that those who are determined thus to ruin the Âryya society by wrong interpretations of Ṣhâstra are themselves unaware of their own treachery; but although they are aware of it the selfishness of the weak human heart prevents them from acting according to that knowledge. What they know remains within them, and what they try to make illiterate and foolish villagers understand is something quite different. Nowadays we can, in speaking of them, merely use the expression "double-

[1] See Introduction. [2] Suited to the three classes of men (*vide ibid.*).

[3] Mukti, which is not gained at one step.

[4] Svechchhâ—that is, acting according to own will, and not according to law or rule.

[5] Action (including ritual), knowledge, and devotion.

tongued," one tongue being within and another without. But we can dare say that had an Âryyan Prince now ruled the country the tongues of such interpreters would forthwith have been actually made double.[1]

Again: It is not to be wondered at that he should always speak ill of that, the excellent virtues of which he has no knowledge; just as a huntswoman throws away the pearl which is formed in the heads of elephants and adorns herself with a garland of berries.[2] Âryyan poets have, therefore, said that such things should not be regretted, for what one has no power to comprehend one neglects but does not dishonour. "The nose alone smells the fragrance of Mallikâ and Mâlatî flowers and not the eye." The eye does not, however, commit any offence thereby; it is merely devoid of the power of smelling. Similarly, should a person (who has yet to await many births before he acquires that Jnâna and Bhakti and purity of mind which befit one for the worship of images) say that worship of images is a mistake, he must not be understood to commit any offence or to deserve any punishment. In fact, he is an object of pity to the public, for Bhagavân has not yet granted him the power to comprehend the deep and solemn truth[3] relating to the worship of images of the Deity. It should be understood that although he is a mânava (man) in outward appearance, internally he is still imperfect in mânavatva.[4] He is still a stranger in the human world, only just elevated from the lower stratum of being. However that may be, wayfarers need be warned before giving moral advice to a highway robber. All this argument should be postponed and first of all society should be warned. Fortunately, the robbers have, by their inopportune

[1] Their tongues would have been slit for their heresy.

[2] Gunjâ, a red blackberry, used by goldsmiths in India as a small weight.

[3] Tattva.

[4] The proper state of a descendant of Manu or Humanity. As some one has remarked, the bulk of human beings now existing can only be said to be candidates for true humanity.

howling, made themselves known, and wayfarers have recognized their voice. The Âryyan society has for some time discovered the hidden purpose of these interpretations of the Ṣhâstra. The Mother of the world, the subduer of Daityas,[1] has appeared in the hearts of devotees and saved the world from these Daityas of the Kali Yuga. At that part of the Ṣhrîmadbhâgavata where Bhagavân, the dispeller of the fear of existence, in dealing with sâdhana dharma,[2] discusses with Uddhava, the Prince of devotees, the subject[3] of devotees, He says:

"Tîrthas[4] consisting of water are not such tîrthas; images of Devas made of earth and of stone are not such Devas as sâdhus[5] are, for tîrthas consisting of water and images of Devas made of earth and stone purify sinners after long service and worship, whilst sâdhus possess such wonderful power that their sight alone sanctifies Jîva."

"He who worships my image without (through illusion) knowing me, as Âtmâ-Îṣhvara, the dweller in all things, merely pours oblations into ashes."[6]

The aforesaid healers consider these two ṣhlokas also as evidence in favour of the theory of the Deity possessing no form. From the first ṣhloka they glean that tîrthas consisting of water are not tîrthas at all, and images of Devas made of earth are not Devas at all. But, I ask, had it been so, why should it be said that they purify after a long time? By what power can a tîrtha which is not a tîrtha, and a Deva who is not a Deva, purify jîva even after long service? When Bhagavân has said that they purify if they are long served, the ṣhloka must be understood to mean that the power

[1] Demons.

[2] The rules relating to Sâdhana. For Dharma, see Introduction.

[3] *Lit.*: "states the tattva."

[4] Places of pilgrimage, such as Kâlîghât, Gaya, Kâmâkhyâ, Purî, etc. The esoteric tîrthas are in the human body itself.

[5] Saintly men.

[6] That is, he does what is useless; for oblations should be poured into fire.

of purification which pious devotees possess is greater than that of tîrthas and images of Devatâs. Purification by tîrthas and images of Devas depends on long service and worship by Jîva, but this is not needed to gain purification by the gracious look of devotees who freely dispense their mercy. We are confident that sâdhakas will forgive the thieves who possess so little intelligence and cunning as to proceed to commit theft in the first and second parts of a verse, in the third of which they are detected.

Again, from the second ṣhloka they have gathered that those who worship images instead of praying in this fashion, " Îshvara, who dwells in all things," merely pour oblations into ashes. We regret to say that the thought of this illustration in connection with such an illustrator induces us to smile as well as puts us to shame. Why do such men as have no faith in pûjâ, japa, stava, and homa[1] make use of the illustration of pouring oblations into ashes? It is because oblations are actually poured into fire that the expression " pouring oblations into ashes " means the contrary thing. To pour oblations into fire is an act of worship towards an embodied Deity. If this worship of embodied Deity is itself a mistaken act, whence comes this illustration drawn from homa? However that may be, Bhagavân has said that whoever worships His image without the knowledge that He dwells in all things and is Âtmâ and Îṣhvara, merely pours oblations into ashes, because, without the knowledge that He is in all things, sentient as well as non-sentient, how can one believe in His existence in that image and in the possibility of the invocation of His life into it, and the like? In other words, whoever has not the knowledge that He is Brahman without distinctions is even totally unfit for image worship. The import of the ṣhloka, therefore, comes to this, that without knowledge

[1] Worship, recitation, hymn and fire sacrifice (homa) (see Introduction).

of Brahman, image-worship is of no avail ; but by virtue of the pernicious influence of the present time it has come to mean that whoever worships images merely pours oblations into ashes. Great man ! keep your interpretation to yourself. Do not, with an uncalled-for generosity, come forward to preach that to people which will make them as poor as street beggars. Do not, I pray, any longer create mischief in the name of interpretation.

CHAPTER VII

WHAT IS SHAKTI?[1]

HERE, in the course of the present discussion, it has become necessary to decide a few points about Ṣhakti-tattva. Whether because of the particular age we live in, or of sectarianism, there exist in Bengal a number of leaders, or pseudo-leaders, of the religious community who think and preach that they alone and a few other persons belonging to their community and holding their views are learned in all Ṣhâstras, competent to pass judgment on all Tattvas and Dîkshâ-gurus of sâdhakas[2] belonging to all communities. We know not by what curse of Bhagavân they consider it a great sin, for which there is no atonement, to believe that Bhagavân and Bhagavatî are one and the same being, nor why they look down with hatred and disgust, even as though their touch were polluting as that of hell-worms, on all persons who entertain such a belief. Such conduct by men towards their fellow - beings is not altogether impossible ; but there is no escape for even Devatâs, no pardon for even Îṣhvara, from them. A little inquiry in confidence will reveal to Sâdhakas that in most places these people, being themselves Vaishṇavas, first worship Ṣhrîkṛishṇa, and then offer to Ṣhrî Râdhikâ the articles already offered to Him. The reason for their doing so is that Ṣhrîkṛishṇa, who holds all ṣhakti, is Lord and Ṣhrî Râdhikâ, who is Ṣhakti Herself, is His

[1] Ṣhakti-tattva. Shakti is that which makes able, or that Power by virtue of which things happen or act (see p. 314, *post*). That power belongs to, or more properly *is*, the Brahman, and is of various kinds, as to which see following pages.

[2] That is, gurus who initiate ; and other matters relating to sâdhakas.

handmaid, and that it is the duty of the handmaid to partake of the leavings of Her Lord's food—leavings which are tokens of His favour and, consequently, precious and particularly dear to Her. The honour of Râdhikâ, however, is thus in a fashion maintained, because She is the companion or, at least, handmaid of Ṣhrîkṛishṇa. But the case of Gâyatrî, who is single, is different. Had She been the companion of any Ḍeva they could easily have included Her in the same class with Râdhikâ; but Gâyatrî, the Mother of the three Vedas, and the progenitrix of the triad of Devas,[1] is no one's companion, and thus there is no opportunity to call Her anyone's handmaid. For this reason they have altogether abandoned Gâyatrî, considering Her to be "bare Ṣhakti." Born in the line of Brahmâ, these people yet think that it is a great sin to repeat Gâyatrî or even to admit that She is Brahman or Îṣhvara, and consider that it is improper to divulge to the public this intense secret devotion in the store of sâdhana. It is only with a view to keeping up social and family custom and distinction of caste in the sight of others that Brahmana Purohitas[2] are called in, as a formal matter, to invest their children with the sacred thread.[3] If, unable to make time himself, the Purohita requests the father or grandfather of the invested boy to teach him Sandhyâ[4] and Gâyatrî,[5] it is often found that the greatest difficulty arises.

Besides this, there are a few philosophical[6] pandits who say that worship of Ṣhakti is not directly worship of Brahman. In their opinion such an inference is not even contrary to the teaching of Ṣhâstra. They have decided that Âdyâṣhakti Mahâmâyâ[7] is She who is called mâyâ[8] or avidyâ[9] by the Vedânta. This mâyâ or avidyâ

[1] Brahmâ, Vishṇu, Maheṣhvara.
[2] Priests.
[3] At the upanayana ceremony.
[4] The prayers and ritual which go by that name (see Introduction).
[5] The mahâ mantra of that name.
[6] Dârshaṇik.
[7] The Devî as primal Ṣhakti.
[8] Illusion (see Introduction).
[9] Ignorance (see Introduction).

is gross matter, something devoid of consciousness. It is only when Âtmâ, who is consciousness itself, is reflected in Her that She appears to possess consciousness for Her work. For this reason these people say that He who possesses ṣhakti is full of consciousness while ṣhakti is gross matter. What, then, are those who worship gross matter instead of Brahman but gross matter themselves ?

Let us see whether this conclusion of theirs is approved of by the Ṣhâstra. What the Tantra-ṣhâstra has said about ṣhakti we reserve for subsequent discussion. For those people firmly believe that the purpose of the Tantra Shâstra is to give predominance to ṣhakti, and, consequently, evidence drawn from this source will not appear to be of much weight to them. For this reason we shall first of all quote evidence from the Ṣhrîmadbhâgavata. The following appears in the hymn to Ṣhiva by Brahmâ contained in the Chapter on Daksha's sacrifice in the Ṣhrîmadbhâgavata :—

" I know that thou art the Îṣhvara (creator) of the universe. I know also that Thou art Parabrahman, in whom are inseparably united Ṣhakti and Ṣhiva, the womb (yoni) and the seed from which the universe is born. Bhagavân, it is Thou who dividest Thyself into the two forms of Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti, and, like a spider in play, dost create, preserve, and destroy the universe."

Here Brahmâ Himself says that Parabrahman is the non-differentiated substance[1] of Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti. He, therefore, has not embraced Brahmaism by omitting that part which consists of Ṣhakti. Again, in the Ṣhrîmadbhâgavata, Bhagavân says to Uddhava :

" Prakṛiti, the material of this universe, the supreme Purusha, its receptacle and Kâla (Time) its revealer—I am Brahman divided into these three parts."

In the Ṣhrîmadbhagavadgîtâ, Bhagavân says to Arjuna :

" Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, and reason also, and egoism[2]—these are the eightfold division of My nature.

[1] Tattva. [2] Manas, buddhi, ahangkâra.

"This the inferior. Know my other nature, the higher, the life-element, O mighty-armed! by which the universe is upheld."[1]

Here Bhagavân first speaks of gross[2] Prakṛiti, which is divided into eight parts, and then calls the Ṣhakti, who is eternal consciousness[3] itself and gives life to all Jivas, as His (Supreme)[4] prakṛiti, thus dividing prakṛiti into two main parts according as She is "gross" and "conscious."

Again, "Brooding over nature (prakṛiti) which is mine own, I am born through My own Power (mâyâ)."[5]

Here, also, Bhagavân has differentiated between His own true prakṛiti and mâyâ.

The following appears in the hymn to Ṣhiva by Pûtâtmâ contained in the Kâṣhîkhaṇḍa of the Skanda Purâṇa:

"O Viṣhveṣhvara,[6] Thou art the universe itself. There is no difference between Thee and the universe, for Thou art omnipresent and the subject of praiseful hymn,[7] the maker of the hymn and even the hymn itself. Thou art both with and without attribute. Even yogîs are without spiritual perception of this truth concerning Thee, O Lord, who moveth as Thou willeth. She is Thy Ṣhakti who appeared as an embodiment of Thy desire when Thou wert no longer able to enjoy Thyself alone. Though one in reality, Thou hast acquired a dual aspect according as Thou art Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti. Thou art Bhagavân, the embodiment of knowledge and desire is Thy Ṣhakti. Thou, in Thy twofold aspect of Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti, gave rise in Thy play to the Ṣhakti of action, and from this Ṣhakti of action has been generated this world. Thou Thyself art the embodiment of the Ṣhakti of knowledge, Umâ is the embodiment of the Ṣhakti of desire,

[1] Bhagavadgîtâ, chap. vii., verses 4 and 5. [2] Jaḍa.
[3] Chaitanya. [4] Parâprakṛiti.
[5] Bhagavadgîtâ, chap. iv., verse 6. A slight departure has been made from Mrs. Besant's translation in order not to differ from the author's Bengali version. Mrs. Besant's translation is: "Though brooding over nature, which is Mine own, yet I am born through my own Power."
[6] Lord of universe. [7] Stava

and this universe is the embodiment of the Ṣhakti of action.[1] Thus Thou art the sole cause of the universe."

Again : " Thou as Prakṛiti and Purusha first created the Brahmâṇḍa, and then inhabited it as all things moving and non-moving. Therefore, O Thou who pervadeth the whole world, nothing is different from Thee. All things exist in Thee, and Thou pervadeth all things." Vâlmiki says in the Uttarakâṇḍa of Adbhûta Râmâyaṇa :

" Jânakî is primeval, eternal. She is the visible Prakṛiti itself. Through Her, austerity is fruitful and heaven is gained. She is the eternal vibhûti of Vibhus.[2] It is that Mahâṣhakti whom Brahmavâdîs[3] describe in the two forms of Vidyâ and Avidyâ. She is Riddhi ;[4] Siddhi, full of guṇas, made of guṇas, and above guṇas. She exists as both Brahman and Brahmâṇḍa. She is the cause of all causes. She eternally plays as Prakṛiti and Vikṛiti.[5] She is all full of consciousness, and blooms in consciousness. She exists in all things, is Brahman and Mahâkundalinî. All this world, consisting of moving and non-moving things, is but Her play, O Brahman. Holding Her in their hearts, yogîs sever the heart's ties, and exist under their own true aspect. O Good Doer ! whenever dharma[6] becomes tarnished and adharma[7] flourishes, Mahâprakṛiti appears through Her own mâyâ. Râma also is the supreme light, the supreme abode, and the supreme Purusha in flesh and blood ; for there is, in reality, no real difference between Sîtâ and Râma. It is because sâdhus have realized this that they have thrown off the slumber of mâyâ, awakened to the state of the knowledge of truth, and crossed from the jaws of death to the other side of the sea of sangsâra. Râma is

[1] The three Ṣhaktis—Jnâna (cognition), Ichchhâ (volition), Kriyâ (motion).

[2] Vibhûti is the thing which characterizes the higher nature. Vibhu is one who is all-pervading, and vibhûti is both that which it displays and the power by which it displays.

[3] Worshippers of the Brahman.

[4] Spiritual wealth.

[5] Freely rendered as " As cause and effect."

[6] Righteousness.

[7] Unrighteousness.

incomprehensible, full of eternal consciousness, omniscient, omnipresent, the sole creator, preserver, and destroyer of all things, blissful and all pervading. Yogîs contemplate Him inseparably with Sîtâ. I shall truly relate, by way of illustration, how, though in truth birthless, Prakṛiti and Purusha, who exist in causal bodies, take high and wonderful births. Being in truth formless, They assume forms for the salvation of mankind and out of their mercy for it."

Again, when thousand-headed Râvana was killed by Sîtâ in the form of Kâlikâ, Râmachandra said in his hymn to Her:

"Blessed is my birth to-day, and successful is my devotion; for, being unrevealed to the world, Thou hast favoured me by appearing to my view. All the world is Thy creation, and Pradhâna[2] and other Tattvas[3] are seated in Thee. At the time of the great dissolution this world disappears in Thee. Thou art the highest goal of Jîva. Some speak of Thee as Prakṛiti, different from Vikṛiti, while, O Companion of Ṣhiva, others of the spiritually wise describe you as Ṣhiva, Pradhâna, Purusha, Mahâttattva, Brahmâ, Îṣhvara, Avidhyâ, Niyati, Mâyâ and Kâla[4] and hundreds of other limbs emanate from and exist in Thee. Thou art the supreme Ṣhakti, which is eternal and the highest good. Thou art free from all differences, and the shelter of all differences. Thou existeth as Thine own true Self, O Yogeṣhvarî, who art Parameṣhvarî. It is by entering into Thee Purusha makes and unmakes Pradhâna[5] and all other things of the world. It is by uniting with Thee that Purusha, the supreme Deva, enjoys the bliss of His Ownself. Thou art the supreme bliss and also the giver of supreme bliss. Thou art the supreme space, the supreme light, immaculate, Ṣhiva, omnipresent, subtle, Parabrahman, and eternal."

[1] Avyakta. [2] The material cause. [3] Its derivatives.

[4] Ṣhiva: the material and efficient cause; the Tattra Mahat, first of their issue; Creator; Lord; nescience; destiny; power of illusion; and time. Niyati also is the Ṣhaiva category of space. [5] *Vide* last note.

The following appears in the Mahâbhâgavata :

"I bow to the Devî, who grants heaven and liberation, by worshipping whom Virinchi[1] has become the creator, Hari[2] the preserver, and Girîṣha[3] the destroyer, of this world ; who is the object of contemplation by Yogîs, whom Munis possessed of spiritual knowledge describe as the primal and supreme Prakṛiti.

"May She preserve us[4] who on creating this world according to Her free will Has taken birth in it, and receiving Ṣhambhu for Her husband, and whose feet Ṣhambhu placed on His breast when receiving Her for His wife as the fruit of his austerities."

Suta[5] said : "High minded Maharshi Bhagavân Vyâsa, the speaker of endless Dharmaṣhâstras, chief of all men, learned in the Vedas, and proficient in spiritual knowledge, received no satisfaction from his work in connection with the seventeen Purâṇas. He then bethought himself, 'How shall I relate that Mahâpurâṇa, than which no greater Purâṇa exists on earth, and wherein the supreme Bhagavatî is dealt with in all detail ?' Failing to know the truth[8] about the Devî, his heart became agitated. He thought, 'How can that supreme and most abstruse truth[8] be known to me which is not known to even Maheṣhvara of vast knowledge ?' So thinking, and finding no other means, Vyâsa of great intelligence set his whole-hearted devotion[6] on Durgâ, went to the Himâlaya, and there practised severe austerities. The consort of Ṣhiva, who is ever fond of Her devotees, was pleased with such devotion, and remaining unseen in the sky, said, 'Mahâmuni Vyâsa, go to Brahmaloka where all the Ṣhrutis incarnate[7] live ; there you will know my stainless supreme existence.[8] There sung by the Ṣhrutis, I shall

[1] Brahmâ. [2] Vishṇu. [3] Ṣhiva.

[4] The author's rendering is free here. He writes : "May the creatrix of the universe who is worshipped by Ṣhiva preserve the three worlds."

[5] Lomaharshaṇa, the narrator. [6] Bhakti.

[7] That is, the four Vedas incarnate (Mûrtimatî). Literally, "possessing form." [8] Tattva.

become visible and do what is desired of by you." Hearing this message from above, Bhagavân Vedavyâsa at once repaired to Brahmaloka, bowed to the four Vedas and asked, "What is the supreme and undecaying Brahman?"

"Great Muni, hearing the Ṛishi ask this question with modesty and submissiveness, the Vedas at once replied by turns."

Rigveda said: "In whom are contained all things, out of whom appear all things, and whom all describe as the highest Being,[1] that Âdyâ (primal) Bhagavatî is Brahman itself."

Yajurveda said: "The Îṣhvarî who is worshipped in all yajnas and in yoga and for whose existence we (Vedas) are deemed the authority, that Bhagavatî alone is Brahman itself."

Sâmaveda said: "By whom this universe is moved, whom all yogîs contemplate, and by whose light the universe is manifested, that world-pervading Durgâ alone is supreme Brahman."

Atharvaveda said: "The Îṣhvarî of Suras[2] whom all who are favoured for their devotion see, that Bhagavatî Durgâ all Ṣhâstras describe as Supreme Brahman."

Suta said, hearing the incarnate Ṣhrutis thus express themselves: "Vyâsa, the son of Satyavatî, became certain that Bhagavatî Durgâ was supreme Brahman." After they had spoken as above mentioned, the Ṣhrutis also again said unto the Mahâmuni: "What we have said we shall make directly visible to you." So saying, the Ṣhrutis began to sing in praise of that Parameṣhvarî who is existence, consciousness, and bliss, who is pure, and who holds in Herself all Devas and Devis.

The Ṣhrutis said: "Supreme, universe-embracing Durgâ be pleased. The three Purushas[3] Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara, are created with their individual guṇas according to Thy will for the threefold work of creation,

[1] Tattva.

[2] Devas and Devîs.

[3] "Persons."

preservation, and destruction. But, O Mother, Thou hast no creator in the three worlds. Who in the world can therefore describe Thy qualities, impenetrable by the intellect of Jîvas?

"O Mother of the three worlds, it is by worshipping Thee that Hari destroys invincible Daityas and thus preserves the three worlds, and it was by holding Thy feet on His breast that Maheṣhvara was able to drink poison deadly enough to destroy the three worlds.[1] What can we say which will describe the force of that (incomprehensible) nature of Thine?"

"We bow to Thee, O Mother who art the body, the consciousness, the Ṣhakti of motion, and other Ṣhaktis, and the highest Ṣhakti, constituted of Thy own guṇas by the instrumentality of mâyâ, of the supreme Purusha (Paramâtmâ), and Thou art She who residest as consciousness in the bodies of Jîvas, who, charmed by Thy mâyâ and with differentiating knowledge,[2] describe Thee as Purusha."

"Brahma-tattva is that aspect of Thine which is devoid of all distinctive conditions,[3] such as masculinity, femininity, etc. Next, ṣhakti is that primary desire of Thine which arose in Thee for creating the world. That Ṣhakti appeared in one half as the supreme Purusha, so that both Prakṛiti and Purusha are but Ṣhakti in different forms. Both are but manifestations of Thy mâyâ. Even Paramabrahmatattva, therefore, is nothing but Thyself as Ṣhakti."

"Just as to a searcher for truth things like hail formed of water and yet hard, are known to him to be water, so to an inquirer into the nature[4] of all things in this world

[1] At the churning of the ocean, poison was one of the things which issued from the waters. As this poison was powerful enough to destroy the worlds, Ṣhiva drank it, holding it in his throat, which made it blue. Hence he is called Nîlakaṇṭha (blue-throated).

[2] Bhedajnâna; that is, knowledge distinguishing between Purusha and Prakṛiti, who are in reality and according to monistic knowledge one.

[3] Upâdhi.

[4] Tattva.

which has its origin in Brahman, the latter has no separate existence from that of Ṣhakti. Buddhi as Purusha, when realised as Ṣhakti, also is Brahman; for Ṣhakti is manifested Brahman."[1]

"The six Ṣhivas, beginning with Brahmâ, which exist in the six chakras in the body of the Jîva are, when considered separately from Thee, only pretas (that is to say, gross matter[2] in regard to their individual functions). It is only when they come under Thy protection that they attain Parameshvara-hood (that is to say, become Ṣhivas under the influence of Ṣhakti). So, O Ṣhivâ, Îṣhvara-hood is not in Ṣhiva, but in Thee. O universe-pervading Devî Durgâ, O Mother Whose lotus feet are worshipped by immortals, have mercy on us."

Suta said: "Thus sung in a hymn by the incarnate Ṣhrutis the eternal Mother of the universe showed Herself to them."

"Although that Mahâdevî exists as light (consciousness) in all living things yet She assumed a distinct body in order to dispel the doubts of Vyâsa."

"That body was of the brilliance of a thousand suns, and fair with the beauty of ten million moons. She had a thousand arms bearing celestial weapons, was decked with celestial ornaments and garments; smeared with celestial unguents, and seated on a lion. At times She was also seated on a corpse, and had four arms, and was of the colour of a freshly formed cloud. In this manner She appeared sometimes as two-armed, sometimes as four-armed, sometimes as ten-armed, sometimes as eighteen-armed, and sometimes as an hundred armed. At times She appeared possessed of an infinite number of arms and of a sublimely divine form."

"Sometimes She appeared as Vishṇu, with Lakshmî on His left, at others as Ṣhrîkṛishṇa with Râdhikâ on His left; yet again as Brahmâ, with Sarasvatî on His left, and then as Ṣhiva, with Gaurî on His left."

[1] If we realise Buddhi to be Ṣhakti, and Ṣhakti is manifested Brahman, then Buddhi is such Brahman.

[2] Jaḍa.

"The all-pervading Devî who is Brahman in reality dispelled Vyâsa's doubts by thus assuming various forms."

Suta said: "Seeing all these wonderful forms of Jagadambâ,[1] Vyâsa, the great Muni and son of Parâshara, knew the sublime Brahmattatva, and became free from the condition of a Jîva. Then, knowing the desire of Vyâsa, Devî Bhagavatî, the dweller in all hearts, showed him the thousand-petalled lotus lying under Her feet. In the petals of the lotus Vyâsa, the great Ṛishi, saw the great Purâṇa named Mahâbhâgavata replete with sublime letters. Thus blessed, he praised the Devî in various ways, bowed to the earth before Her, and returned to his hermitage."

"He then disclosed the Mahâbhâgavata Purâṇa, most sacred and full of sublime letters, just as he had found it in the thousand-petalled lotus lying under the lotus feet of Jagadambâ."[1]

Again, the following appears in the second chapter of the same book:

Nârada asked: "O Thou, the worshipped of the three worlds, chief of Devas and merciful to devotees. Thou art the greatest of those who know[2] the pure Âtmâ and Brahman. O Parameṣhvara! Thou alone knowest the nature of all things,[3] O Lord of the universe. The other Devas and Ṛishis know it not." "Thou (alone of all Devas) fondly holdest on Thy head Gangâ,[4] who purifies the three worlds (because Thou knowest Her greatness). Thou hast made the moon Thy head[5] ornament (because Thou knowest its essential beauty). Tell me, therefore, O omnipresent Deva, that which I ask of Thee

[1] The mother of the world.

[2] Jnânî.

[3] Vastu-tattva, the principle of all physical existence.

[4] Ṣhiva called Gangâdhara. "Whose coiled and matted hair is wet with the spray of Gangâ" (Mahânirvâṇa Tantra, chap. i.). When the River Ganges descended from Heaven, he intercepted it by His head, so that the earth might not be crushed by the weight of the falling stream.

[5] Ṣhiva is represented as bearing the crescent moon.

now. O Maheṣhvara, who is the Devatâ whom Ye too worship ?"[1]

"Whoever worships Thee as well as Bhagavân Vishṇu, and Brahmâ, the Lord of the Universe, with devotion, attains to such a high state as it is in the power of none on earth to describe. Such being the more than worldly greatness of yourselves, I desire by all means to know the Devatâ whom Ye too worship. Tell me, O Maheṣhvara who is that Devatâ."

Vyâsa said: "O great Muni Jaimini, hearing these words of Nârada, Mahâdeva repeatedly revolved the matter in His mind, and then Mahâdeva said: 'Great Ṛishi, that which you desire to know is the highest and most abstruse truth.[1] My child, how can I reveal that unrevealable truth?'"[1]

Vyâsa said: "Thus replied to by the Deva of Devas, Nârada stood, and, with folded hands, thus addressed Nârâyaṇa, the omnipresent Lord of the universe:

"Though very merciful to His devotees, Bhagavân Maheṣhvara, the Deva of Devas, is yet reluctant to say who is the Devatâ He worships. Tell me, therefore, O Thou Who art merciful to the supplicant, and chief of Devas, who that Devatâ is."

Nârâyaṇa said: "Great Ṛishi, what need have you to hear of that matter?[1] We are your Devatas, and you will attain the highest state by worshipping us. What reason can you then have to know the Devatâ We ourselves worship?"

Vyâsa said: "Thus spoken to by Bhagavân Vishṇu also, Nârada, the great Muni (finding no other means), thus prayed with folded hands and propitiatory words, to both Ṣhiva and Vishṇu."

Nârada said: "O Viṣhveṣhvara, the Deva of Devas, be gracious unto me; O Vasudeva Nârâyaṇa, be gracious unto me.[2] O Ṣhambhu, brilliant with the ornament of

[1] Tattva.

[2] Nârada prays alternately first to Ṣhiva and then to Kṛishṇa.

snakes, be gracious unto me. O Vishṇu, decked with the kaustubha jewel, be gracious unto me. O merciful Gangâdhara, O worshipful Deva, armed with the chakra,[1] be gracious unto me. Vishveshvara, naked as space, O Gadâhara, dressed in yellow, be gracious unto me. O Destroyer of Asura Tripura, I bow to Thee. O Destroyer of Asura Baka, I bow to Thee. O Destroyer of Asura Andhaka, I bow to Thee; O Destroyer of Asura Kangsa,[2] I bow to Thee. O five-headed Deva, riding on a bull, I bow to Thee. O Vishṇu, seated on Garuḍa,[3] I bow to Thee."

"Seeing Nârada, the great Devarshi, thus engaged in prayer, Bhagavân Vishṇu looked towards Deva Maheṣhvara and said:

Vishnu said: "Nârada, the son of Brahmâ is devoted, wise, and modest. Thou ought by all means to favour him, for Thou art gracious to devotees."

Vyâsa said: "Hearing these words of Vishṇu, Maheṣhvara, too, who is ever gracious to the supplicant, said, 'Be it so.'"

"Then high-souled Nârada, possessed of pure knowledge, again questioned Mahâdeva, the seat of mercy and Deva of Devas."

Nârada said: "It is by worshipping Thee, Vishṇu and Brahmâ, the Lord of the Universe, that Indra and other Lokapâlas[4] have attained high states. O chief of Devas, who is the perfect, immutable Devatâ whom Ye worship? Tell me this if Thou hast favour for me. If Thou wilt tell me by whose favour Ye have attained such high Îshvarahood, then shall I know that Thou art gracious unto me."

Vyâsa said: "Thus addressed, Bhagavân, high-souled Shangkara, the Lord of Yogîs, receiving Nârada's words in good grace, revolved all things[5] in His heart, repeatedly contemplated the lotus-feet of Ṣhrî Durgâ, and began to

[1] Discus of Vishṇu.

[2] Demons, Tripura, and Andhaka, slain by Ṣhiva and the other two by Kṛishṇa.

[3] The king of birds, carrier of Vishṇu.

[4] Regents of the quarters, Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirṛiti, and others.

[5] Tattva.

speak to Nârada the great Muni of the one perfect and supreme Brahman."

Mahâdeva said: "She who is pure, eternal Mûlaprakṛiti is Parabrahman itself and the Devatâ We worship.

"That Maheṣhvarî is the sole Mistress[1] of the millions[2] of Brahmâs, Vishṇus, and Maheṣhvaras who are Lords of creation, preservation, and destruction in different Brahmâṇḍas just as this Brahmâ, this Janârdana, and myself, Maheṣhvara, are the Lords of creation, preservation, and destruction in this Brahmâṇḍa. Though really formless, that Mahâdevî assumes bodies in play. This entire universe has been created, is being maintained, and will, in the end, be destroyed by Her. And during its existence the world is overpowered by Her enchantment."

"In Her own play She, in former times, incarnated Herself in full[3] as the daughter of Daksha Prajâpati; She also incarnated Herself as Umâ, daughter of Himâlaya. In partial incarnation[4] She is the consort of Vishṇu as Lakshmî and Sarasvatî, and the consort of Brahmâ as Sâvitrî."

Nârada said: "Chief of Devas, if Thou art pleased with me, if Thou hast kindness for me, then, O Lord, tell me fully and in detail how that perfect Prakṛiti formerly took birth as Daksha Prajapâti's daughter, and how Maheṣhvara obtained Her who is in truth Brahman for wife; again, how She took birth as Himâlaya's daughter, and how three-eyed Mahâdeva obtained that three-eyed Devî for His wife; and again, how that Mother of the universe gave birth to Her two sons, invincible and six-headed Kârtikeya and elephant-headed Gaṇeṣha."

"Before creation this world was devoid of sun, moon,

[1] Vidhâtrî.

[2] Crores. Each world-system has its own Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Ṣhiva.

[3] Pûrṇa—that is, in such incarnation all the Vibhûtis (see p. 242, n. 2) of the Bhagavân are manifested, not so in partial (Ângṣhik) incarnation.

[4] See last note. For as Brahmâ and Vishṇu are but partial manifestation of the Brahman, so are their Ṣhaktis.

and stars, and without day and night. There was no fire and no distinction of directions. The Brahmâṇḍa was then destitute of sound, touch, and the like, etc., devoid of other force,[1] and full of darkness. Then but that one eternal Brahman of whom the Shrutis speak, and that Prakṛiti, who is existence, consciousness, and bliss, alone existed."

"She is pure, full of knowledge, beyond the reach of speech, perpetual, immaculate, unapproachable by even yogîs, all-pervading, untroubled, eternally blissful, subtle, and devoid of all such properties as heaviness, lightness, and the like."

"Subsequently, when that Ânandamayî became desirous to create in order to manifest Her own play of bliss, that supreme Prakṛiti, though in truth formless, at once assumed a form by the strength of Her own will."

"That Devî with form was of the colour of crushed collyrium,[2] Her face was fair and as charming as a full-blown lotus. She had four arms, fiery eyes, dishevelled hair, and full and erect breasts.[3] She was naked as space, terrific, and seated on a lion."

"She then at once created, of Her own will, a Purusha (Mahâkâla) with her three guṇas, sattva, rajas, and tamas. But that Purusha was even then devoid of consciousness."

"Seeing that Purusha made of three guṇas unconscious, She communicated to Him Her own desire for creation."

"Being thus possessed of Shakti through the communication of the desire of Mahâshakti, that Mûlapurusha[4] created with delight three Purushas, according to the threefold division of guṇas—namely, sattva, rajas, and tamas, and the three Purushas thus created were termed Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheshvara."

[1] Tejas. [2] Anjana.

[3] The Devî is generally represented as so formed. They and other physical features are the signs of the Great Maternity. See passages cited in A. and E. Avalon's "Hymns to the Goddess."

[4] Primeval or root Purusha.

[5] Primal "person" (see p. 245, note 3).

"Still, when She saw that there was no sign of creation, the Devî divided the Mûlapurusha into two parts—namely, Jîva and Paramapurusha."

"Prakṛiti also divided Herself, according to Her own will, into three parts — namely, Mâyâ, Vidyâ, and Paramâ."

"Of these Mâyâ is She who charms Jîvas and is the Ṣhakti who creates the sangsâra. Paramâ is the Ṣhakti, full of consciousness and life, who is the cause of movements in Jîvas, and Vidyâ is She who is made of pure spiritual knowledge and who is the Ṣhakti which dissolves the sangsâra."

Mâyâvṛito hi jîvastâng paramâng nekshate mune
Tâbhyâng samâshritâstespi purushâ vishayaishiṇah
Babhûburmuniṣhârddûla mugdhâstanmâyayâ tadâ
Sâ tṛitîyâ parâ vidyâ panchadhâ yâbhavat svayam
Gangâ durgâ cha sâvitrî lakshmîṣhchaiva sarasvatî
Sâ prâha prakṛitirvidyâ brahmavîshṇumaheṣhvarân
Pratyakshagâ jagaddhâtrî viniyojya pṛithak pṛithak
Sṛishṭyarthang purushâ yûyang mayâ sṛishṭâ nijechchhayâ
Tatkurushva mahabhâgâ yathechchha mama jâyate
Brahmâ srijatu bhûtâni sthâvarâṇi charâṇi cha
Vividhâni vichitrâni châsangkhyeyâni sangyatah
Vishṇuresha mahâvâhuh karotu pratipâlanam
Nihatya jagatâng kshobhakârakân valinâng varah
Ṣhivastamoguṇâkrântah ṣheṣhe sarvamidang jagat
Nâṣhayishyati nâṣhechchâ yadâ me sambhavishyati
Parasparancha sṛishtyâdikâryeshu trishu vaidhruvam
Vidhâtavyang hi sâhâyyang yushmâbhih purushatrayaih
Ahancha panchadhâ bhûtvâ sâvitryâdyâ varânganâh
Bhavatâm vanitâ bhûtvâ viharishye nijechchayâ
Tathângṣhatascha sambhûya sarvajantushu yoshitah
Prasavishyâmi bhûtâni vividhâni nijechchayâ
Brahmangstvang mânasîng sṛishting karotu mama ṣhâsanât

Sâmpratam nânyathâ sṛishtirvistṛiteyam bhavishyati
Ityuktvâ tânmahâvidyâ prakṛitih sâ parâtparâ
Svayamantardadhe teshâng brahmâdînâncha paṣhyatâm[1]

[" O Muni! overpowered by mâyâ, Jîva does not see that Paramâ. Subject to these two (Paramâ and Mâyâ), O great Muni, those Purushas (Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Ṣhiva) also became at that time attached to the world, being influenced thereto by mâyâ. The third supreme Vidyâ is She who divided Herself into five forms—namely, Gangâ, Durgâ, Sâvitrî, Lakshmî, and Sarasvatî. Addressing Herself to Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara separately, that Prakṛiti Vidyâ, the visible Jagaddhâtrî (holder of the universe), said to them : ' You, Purusha, have been created by me of my own accord for the purpose of creation. O high - favoured Devas, do that which is my desire. Brahmâ, do Thou create with care all things, movable and immoveable, of various kinds, diversified and innumerable. Vishṇu, this great-armed Deva, the best of the strong, do Thou maintain by destroying all such as oppress the worlds. Ṣhiva, through the tamas guṇa, will in the end destroy all this world when the desire for destruction will arise in Me. In these three works of creation and the like do you three Purushas render help to each other. I, too, will divide myself into five forms as Sâvitrî and other fair women, and being your wives move as I desire. And becoming, with a part of Myself, the female among all living things, I shall give birth to various beings of my own will. O Brahmâ, do you, under my order, make a mental creation. At present no other creation should be made. Saying this to them, that Prakṛiti Mahâvidyâ, who is supreme over the supreme, Herself disappeared from the sight of Brahmâ and the other Devas."]

[1] The author does not translate these verses, an English rendering of which is given in brackets in the text.

The following appears in the second chapter of Devî Bhâgavata:

"The Paramâ (supreme) Âdyâ (primal) Ṣhakti, who is called Vidyâ according to Ṣhruti, She who dwells in all things, resides in all hearts, destroys the bonds of sangsâra, and is incomprehensible to the wicked; She who is ever visible to munis who meditate upon Her—may that Bhagavatî, whose substance is existence, consciousness, and bliss—grant a pious mind to Jîva."

"She who, after having created the universe as sat[1] and asat[2] and jaḍa[3] and chaitanya,[4] maintains it by Her own ṣhakti consisting of three guṇas; She who, again, at the end of the Kalpa[5], alone sinks in Self-bliss after destroying the manifestation of this universe—I remember that Mother of the Universe in my heart."

"It is generally known that Brahmâ creates all this universe; but those who are acquainted with the Purâṇas and Vedas say that He took birth in the navel-lotus of Vishṇu. They have thus indirectly said that Brahmâ is not an independent Creator of the world for He, too, has had to be born elsewhere according to another's desire."

"For when in Mahâpralaya Vishṇu lay on the bed of Ananta,[6] Brahmâ appeared in His navel-lotus. Here, too, thousand-headed Ananta Deva supports Vishṇu on His body. How can Bhagavân be said to possess independent Ṣhakti when He has to depend on another for his support?"

When in Mahâpralaya the world is converted into a single ocean the water of that single ocean is undoubtedly liquid. All admit that a liquid can never exist without a receptacle. But Vishṇu supports Brahmâ, Ananta Deva supports Vishṇu, and the water of the ocean supports Ananta Deva; but who supports this mass of

[1] True, permanent.
[2] Untrue, transient.
[3] Gross, material, immovable.
[4] Consciousness, moving sentient life.
[5] See p. 134, note 2.
[6] The thousand-headed snake.

water ? Extremely difficult to understand is this matter. When, on carefully examining one receptacle after another, one comes to the end of all receptacles, then it is that there is disclosed the Supreme existence[1] of the Mahâ-ṣhakti who supports all things. I make supplication to that Mother of all things.

" I make supplication to that Supreme Ṣhakti, to that Devî to whom Brahmâ, seated on the navel-lotus, prayed when (on the occasion of the destruction of Madhu and Kaitabha) he saw Vishṇu with His eyes shut in yoga-nidra."[2]

Again, the following appears in the fourth chapter of the same book :

Suta said : " Thus, asked by Vyâsa, high-minded Nârada, proficient in the knowledge of Veda, spoke, with great delight."

Nârada said : " High-favoured son of Parâṣhara, the matter which you ask me was, of yore, asked by my father, Brahmâ, of Bhagavân Madhusûdana."[3]

" Seeing Hari, the chief of Devas, Lord of the world, and husband of Lakshmî, rapt in meditation, my father was astonished and questioned that Vâsudeva, immersed in intense devotion, who is decked with the Kaustubha Jewel,[4] holds the conch-shell,[5] discus,[6] and mace,[7] bears the Ṣhrîvatsa[8] mark, and is dressed in yellow garments ; He who is four-armed, the cause of all Lokas,[9] the Guru of the world, the Lord of the world, the Deva of Devas."

Brahmâ said : " O Janardana, Deva of Devas and Lord of the world, since Thou art Thyself the Îṣhvara[10] of past, future, and present, why dost Thou perform austerity and devotion, and whom dost Thou contemplate ? This is a matter of great wonder to me. Being Thyself the

1 Tattva. 2 Sleep of yoga.
3 A name of Kṛishṇa as the destroyer of Madhu, the demon.
4 A gem secured by Vishṇu at the churning of the ocean.
5 Shangkha. 6 Chakra. 7 Gada.
8 A patch of white hair on the breast of Vishṇu.
9 The fourteen regions. 10 Lord Ordainer.

Lord of all the world, yet Thou contemplateth another. What, O Chief of Devas, can be stranger than this ?"

"Sprung from Thy navel-lotus I am Creator of this entire universe. Thou art the cause of all causes. What greater Devatâ can there be in this world than Thyself ? O husband of Lakshmî ! tell me this."

"Lord of the world, I know that Thou art the first of all, the cause of all, the creator, preserver, and destroyer of all, the doer of all work, and the possessor of all Ṣhaktis. Great King, I create this world according to Thy desire ; and Hara, who destroys it at the time of dissolution, is also always guided by Thy words.

"Îṣha,[1] it is under Thy orders that the sun travels in the sky, the wind blows auspiciously or inauspiciously, fire gives heat, and clouds pour rain.

"Being Îṣhvara of all, what Devatâ dost Thou contemplate ? This I cannot conceive ; for as for myself I do not see a greater Devatâ than Thyself in the three worlds."

"O Noble-doer, I pray Thee, kindly tell me this, for Smṛiti says that great people seldom make a secret of anything."

Hearing these words of Prajâpati,[2] Vishṇu said : "Be attentive ; I shall tell you that which I have in my mind."

"Although Devas, Asuras, and men know Thyself, Myself, and Mahadeva to be creator, preserver, and destroyer, yet Thou, versed in the Veda, know that it is through Ṣhakti that Thou art creator, I am preserver, and Mahâdeva is destroyer."[3]

"In Thee exists the Râjasî Ṣhakti who brings forth the world, in Myself the Sâttvikî Ṣhakti, who maintains the world, and in Mahârudra the Tâmasî Ṣhakti, who destroys the world."

[1] Lord, Ordainer. [2] Brahmâ.

[3] And so the Kubjikâ Tantra says that it is not Brahmâ, but Brâhmî, who creates ; it is not Vishṇu, but Vaiṣhṇavî, who preserves : it is not Rûdra, but Rûdranî, who destroys. Their husbands are as inert as corpses.

"Devoid of these Ṣhaktis Thou art no longer Lord of creation, I am unable to maintain the world, and Mahâ-deva also is unable to destroy it."

"Vibhu,[1] both directly and indirectly we are always subject to that Îṣhvarî of all. O Noble-doer, listen to an instance of this."

"It is true that in Mahâpralaya[2] I lie on Ananta as my couch, but even then I am certainly dependent; for, subject to that Mahâṣhakti, I again awake at the proper time under the influence of Kâla.[3]

"It is under Her that I ever practise austerity and at times freely enjoy the company of Lakshmî, and at times I am engaged in terrific wars with Dânavas—wars fearful to all Lokas and oppressive to the beings therein."

"Knower of Dharma, of yore, in that one ocean, I fought a hand to hand fight for five thousand years. You saw that with Your own eyes."

"It was through the grace of the Supreme Devî that I was able to kill the two wicked Dânavas Madhu and Kaitabha, intoxicated by vanity and born of the dirt of my ears."

"Did You not perceive even then that the Ṣhakti aspect alone, supreme over the supreme, is the cause of all action? Great Soul, who do You, then, repeatedly ask about the matter?"

"She is the cause of all causes, created by Whose will I, as Purusha, live in the one ocean and incarnate myself age after age as tortoise, boar, half-man, half-lion, dwarf, and the like."

"No one in the three worlds wishes to be born as a lower animal. I, too, did not of my own free will, take birth as a boar and as other lower animals."

"Who will willingly take birth as a fish or the like, forsaking the blissful company of Lakshmî in Vaikuṇṭha? What independent Purusha leaves a soft bed for the back

[1] Omnipresent Deva. [2] The great dissolution of things. [3] Time.

of Garuḍa,[1] and proceeds to wage formidable wars with invincible Daityas ?"

"O birthless Deva, in ancient time, when the bow-string slipped in your presence, my head was severed and thrown off, no one knew where. At that time You cut off the head of a horse and had it attached to my body by Viṣhvakarma, the great artisan."[2]

"Since then I am known by the name of Hayagrîva, Lord of Lokas.[3] That incident You saw with Your own eyes. Had I been independent why should I have suffered so much trouble amongst the Lokas ?"[3]

"Know, therefore, that I am not independent, that I am in every way subject to Ṣhakti, and that I always contemplate that great Ṣhakti. Lotus-born Deva, I do not know of any truth[4] superior to this."

Nârada said : "This was told by Vishṇu to the lotus-born Deva. O great Muni, the lotus-born Deva subsequently told this truth[4] to me."

"Do you too, therefore, worship the lotus-feet of the Devî in your heart without misgiving, for the attainment of your object."

Sâdhaka, can anyone who has no bias as regards Ṣhakti and no malice also as regards Vishṇu, if chosen an arbiter, ever say, on seeing all this evidence drawn from the Ṣhâstra, that he who considers Ṣhakti to be devoid of consciousness[5] is a believer ? In all ages, and particularly in the Kali age, the career of religious revolution is indomitable. When Chaitanya-deva[6] deluged all Bengal with huge waves of the name of Hari, he observed that Brâhmaṇa, Kshatriya, and Vaiṣhya families were on the verge of ruin. He

[1] The Bird-king, Vehicle (vâhana) of Vishṇu.

[2] Hence Vishṇu is called Hayagrîva (horse-faced one). The incident is related in Devî Bhâgavata. Vishṇu fell asleep resting on his bow. Brahmâ and others, wishing to awaken him, induced the white ants, called vamrîs, to bite through the bow-string. The mighty bow was released and cut off Vishṇu's head, which was not found, and a horse's head was then joined to the body.

[3] The fourteen regions. See Introduction.

[4] Tattva.

[5] Jaḍa.

[6] The Vaishṇava Saint of that name.

thought that in the then state of society full of Navashâkha Shûdras,[1] incompetent[2] for either the Vaidik or Tântrik dharma, Harinâm Sangkîrtana[3] was the best Dharma, and consequently he preached that Dharma.

In those days, owing to the degeneration of Brâhmaṇas in a society full of Shûdras and of the lowest classes, such Purâṇas as Devî-bhâgavata, Mahâbhâgavata, etc., in which the greatness of Shakti is established, ceased to be preached in Bengal. Moreover, owing to the steady increase of the lowest classes through the influence of the Kali age, only such Purâṇas and Shâstra as are favourable exclusively to the preaching of the name of Hari, and mainly and elaborately describe the greatness of Vishṇu amongst all Devas and Devîs, began to be read, explained, recited, and so forth. Although the teachers[4] and Brâhmaṇas of the country proficient in Shâstra were in many cases worshippers of the Shakti Mantra, most of them were yet dependent on Shûdras for their living, so that in spite of their knowledge of the Shâstras in which the greatness of Shakti is established, they dared not bring them forward to the public notice for fear of thereby losing their means of livelihood.

Next, those who became Prabhus[5] upon the spread throughout the country of branches and sub-branches of the Chaitanya[6] community, have from generation to generation shown extreme partiality towards one part of the Shâstra, so that the inferences which they have drawn therefrom touch only that part of the Shâstras, and are alone revered as essential truths within their own community. It is these one-sided inferences of the Prabhus which have brought ruin on Bengal. Ordinary

[1] Milkman, gardener, oilman, weaver, confectioner, betel-grower, potter, smith, and barber castes—middle-class Shûdras, as opposed both to the highest class Kâyasthas, etc., and the lowest class.

[2] Adhikâra.

[3] Singing Hari's (Vishṇu's) name with music and dancing.

[4] Adhyâpakas.

[5] Gossains, or religious preceptors of Vaishṇavas.

[6] The Vaishṇava Saint of that name.

Vaishṇavas have been given to understand that the Lord is the owner of Ṣhakti and that Ṣhakti is His servitress, so that they worship Râdhikâ with articles of food already offered to Ṣhrîkṛishṇa.[1] At the present time the book Chaṇḍî, contained in the Mârkaṇḍeya Purâṇa, which describes the greatness of the Devî, is commonly taken to be the Ṣhâstra in which Ṣhakti stands supreme. The Prabhus, quoting it as their authority, say that as one of the names of Ṣhakti is Vishṇumâyâ, she must therefore be a great Vaishṇavî.[2] It is thus because Ṣhakti is considered to be a great Vaishṇavî, that modern Vaishṇavas do Ṣhiva the favour of taking Him for a "Spiritual brother." Let Bhagavân judge their conduct. Here we shall merely discuss the Ṣhâstrik evidence, on which the notion that Bhagavatî is a great Vaishṇavî is based.

It has been said in Chaṇḍi :

"Under the influence of the Mahâmâyâ of Bhagavân, who preserves the sangsâra, Jîvas fall into the pit of illusion,[3] with its eddies of 'mineness.'"[4]

Do not, therefore, be astonished at this. Mahâmâyâ is the Yoganidrâ[5] of Hari, the Lord of the universe, and it is by Her that this world is charmed.

"That Devî Bhagavatî Mahâmâyâ forcibly draws the mental faculties of even the wise and gives them over to illusion."[6]

By Her is created this world, consisting of things moving and non-moving, and She alone, when so pleased, is the dispenser of blessings and gives salvation to Jîva.

"That eternal (Supreme) Vidyâ[7] is both the cause of salvation, and the cause of Jîvas' bondage in Sangsâra. She is the Îṣhvarî of the Îṣhvaras of all."[8]

[1] Literally, leavings of food partaken by Ṣhrîkṛishṇa.

[2] Worshipper of Vishṇu.

[3] Moha.

[4] Mamatâ (egoism).

[5] Sleep of Yoga of Îṣhvara.

[6] Moha ; and so also the Kâlikâ Purâṇa states that the Devî leads men into confusion, egoism, sensual desire, etc. She is the Bewilderer (sarvamohinî) (Lalitâ Sahasranâma, verse 137), bewildering the world with Her mâyâ (Kûrma Purâṇa).

[7] The Devî (see Introduction).

[8] Lord of all Lords.

The Vaishṇava Prabhus here say that the two adjectival expressions, "The Yoganidrâ of the Lord of the Universe" and "The Mahâmâyâ of Hari," prove beyond doubt the subordination of Mahâmâyâ or Ṣhakti to Hari, otherwise, "Why," they argue, "should Ṣhâstra call Her the Mahâmâyâ of Hari or the Yoganidrâ of the Lord of the Universe?" What is known through another is surely subordinate to that other; as, for instance, expressions such as man's sleep, man's intelligence, and man's power indicate sleep, intelligence, and power subordinate to man.

We shall subsequently refer to the Ṣhâstrik interpretations and inferences regarding the points in issue. Here it is merely necessary to understand whether Bhagavân's Yoganidrâ is a thing similar to your or my nidrâ.[1] Assuming, for argument, that Yoganidrâ is nothing but the nidrâṣhakti[2] subordinate to Bhagavân: the question still remains, why, in the chapter relating to the destruction of Madhu and Kaitabha, and in which the power of Yoganidrâ has been described, Brahmâ, seated on the navel-lotus of Bhagavân, is said to have prayed to Nidrâ instead of to Vishṇu for Vishṇu's awakening? Who is there in the world so foolish as to pray to sleep, a thing unconscious, instead of to the sleeping conscious person for his awakening? Again, the killing of Madhu and Kaitabha by Bhagavân redounds to the glory of Bhagavân alone. But why, when about to relate the greatness of Ṣhakti in the Chaṇḍî, does Mârkaṇḍeya, the great Ṛishi, first of all speak of the greatness of Vishṇu, as illustrated by the killing of Madhu and Kaitabha?

We deem it a sin even to believe that anything said by the great Ṛishi, Mârkaṇḍeya, can be tainted with the fault of superfluity. What, then, is the right solution of these questions? Some interpreters of the Chaṇḍî have, with the object of arriving at that solution, devised forced meanings of the ṣhlokas concerned, and by their means

[1] Sleep. [2] Power of sleep.

endeavoured to establish the greatness of Ṣhakti. But we say that a solution arrived at through forced meanings of the words of Ṣhâstra can never be a right solution. Again, what danger has there appeared which is so great that the unsuspecting world must be deceived with forced interpretations of the words of Ṣhâstra? What does it matter to you or to me if, according to Ṣhâstra, Vishṇu becomes supreme and Ṣhakti His subordinate? In reality, what the interpreters consider to be a danger is none at all, but rather a blessing. None can become subordinate or supreme. What one is, one remains. Only you and I, through the perversity of our intellects, ascribe to Devatas the states of superiority and subordination to which we ourselves are subject, and, being thus unable to perceive the subtle Ṣhâstrik truth,[1] we go down to perdition. The Ṣhakti-tattva made of mâyâ, with which you and I are acquainted, is not the same thing as the Ṣhakti-tattva superior to mâyâ which belongs to Bhagavân. The sleep consisting of delusion[2] and mâyâ, which we know of, is not the same thing as Bhagavân's sleep, which consists of constant consciousness. Just as you and I are overpowered by sleep, so your and my sleep is also corrupted by the corruption of non-conscious gross matter.[3] But when Bhagavân is overpowered by sleep, His yoganidrâ is that great Ṣhakti which is ever awake and full of light.[4] When a Jîva sleeps his imperfect sleep, another can awaken him by any means; for any sharp contact with sound, touch, etc., causes the Jîva's senses to ruffle the imperfect power of sleep and to awaken him by his own consciousness; thus you and I can awaken a sleeping person by calling or pushing him.

But not so with Bhagavân. He possesses all ṣhaktis. No ṣhakti in Him is imperfect. For this reason, while Jîva's sleep is sleep, Îṣhvara's sleep is yoganidrâ. Your and my mâyâ is called simply mâyâ. But his mâyâ is called yoga-mâyâ. You or I can, at the utmost, be a

[1] Tattva. [2] Moha. [3] Jaḍa. [4] Jyotih.

yogî, but Bhagavân is the Îṣhvara of all yogas, and so His Ṣhakti is Îṣhvarî of the Îṣhvara of all yogas. A Jîva can rarely acquire an infinitesimal part of that ṣhakti by dint of yoga, but that ṣhakti is eternally present in Bhagavân. Jîva is imperfect; so Jîva's ṣhakti also is imperfect. Bhagavân is perfect; so His Ṣhakti also is perfect. Jîva is constituted mainly of the inert[1] principle; and so Jîva's ṣhakti is also predominated by the same principle. Bhagavân is made of consciousness; so His Ṣhakti also is made of consciousness. Your or my ṣhakti of sleep is constituted of the inert principle, but Bhagavân's Ṣhakti of sleep is constituted of the conscious principle.

Even when He is asleep, He remains awake; for while your or my sleep is merely constituted of the tamas guṇa, His sleep is superior to tamas guṇa, although constituted of it. For this reason, at the time of the great dissolution[2] the Mother of the universe assumes the aspect of sleep; and, taking on Her lap all Her sons and daughters from Brahmâ, Vishṇu and Maheṣhvara downwards, inhabiting the innumerable crores of Brahmâṇḍas, She puts them all to sleep. But She who is existence, consciousness, and bliss, and supports the universe, Herself remains awake. When, after a whole day's play, the son stands before the mother in the evening with a weary body, she at once takes him on her lap and removes the weariness by putting him to sleep. It is this subject[3] which has been so well depicted in the illuminating story of the killing of Madhu and Kaitabha. After the great dissolution[2] when the world remains immersed in the one ocean, Bhagavân sleeps in Yoganidrâ to the close of ages, shutting his eyes and lying on Ananta in the midst of that mass of water which deluges the Brahmaṇḍâs.

Vishṇu is the preserver of the world. Whom will He preserve when the great dissolution[2] is accomplished? When there will be creation again, then there will be necessity for preservation. The long period

[1] Jaḍa. [2] Mahâpralaya. [3] Tattva.

intervening is the time for Vishṇu's rest. Vishṇu plays till the arrival of the great dissolution, and instantly the son's play is ended the Mother lays Him on the bed of rest and puts him to deep sleep. Unlike other mothers, She has to make no effort in order to put the son to sleep. The universe-pervading Devî is Herself in one aspect sleep. In proper time She appears in that aspect, and lays Bhagavân on Her lap. He cannot, therefore, be awakened by being called like other sleeping persons. He can rise only when the Devî, who appears as sleep, frees Him from Her own tâmasik bonds. When, therefore, Bhagavân Brahmâ failed to break Vishṇu's sleep by all manner of prayer, entreaty, etc., He understood that that sleep, which was in reality consciousness, was not ordinary sleep. Perceiving that the mercy of Yoganidrâ, the Mother of the world, could alone save Him, he began to praise Her. From the very fact that all the prayers, entreaties, loud calls, and the like, of Brahmâ, with His four mouths, could not break Vishṇu's sleep, it must be understood that sleep was not subordinate to Vishṇu, but Vishṇu was subordinate to sleep. Had it been Vishṇu's sleep, it would have been easily broken ; but it was sleep's Vishṇu, and, therefore, the sleep did not break.

Again, in the place where Bhagavân is described as being tired with fighting with Madhu and Kaitabha, Ṣhâstra says :

" Charmed by Mahâmâyâ, those two Daityas, maddened with the pride of their great strength, requested Keṣhava[1] to ask for some blessing from them." What kind of thing was that charming by Mahâmâyâ ? The Chaṇḍī does not particularly relate when and how She charmed the Asuras, and why the two Daityas also all at once asked Bhagavân to seek a blessing from them. In fact, although the greatness of the Devî has been described in the Chaṇḍî, the description is very short. We cannot, there-

[1] Vishṇu.

fore, get a correct answer to these intricate questions from the Chaṇḍî itself. For this reason we shall quote from the Devî-Bhâgavata the relevant portions of the account which it gives of the killing of Madhu and Kaitabha. Seekers of truth will know from them the deep mystery which surrounds the story of the killing of Madhu and Kaitabha and free their minds from doubts.

When, after having performed severe austerities for a thousand years, and having received, on that account, the blessing of death-at-will[1] from the Devî, Madhu and Kaitabha advanced to fight with Brahmâ in order to wrest from Him His lotus-seat; Brahmâ prayed to Vishṇu in great fear, but failed to awaken Him. Here Ṣhâstra says :

" Seeing that all His prayers were of no avail in awakening Bhagavân Hari, who was lying under the influence of Yoganidrâ, Brahmâ thought to himself that Vishṇu was surely sleeping under the influence of that Mahâṣhakti. What will my sorrow avail, when the Founder of Dharma[2] Himself will not awake at this crisis of Adharma ?[3]

" The two Dânavas, puffed up with pride, have come with the object of killing me. What shall I do—where shall I go ? There is none to save me." Revolving this in His mind, Brahmâ decided and resolved to pray to Yoganidrâ with unswerving devotion. He considered in His mind that in the insurmountable danger which faced Him at that time, Mahâṣhakti alone could save Him ; that Mahâṣhakti, under whose influence even Vishṇu, whose substance was eternal consciousness, lay deprived of the power of movement.

" Just as a dead man does not perceive sound and other qualities of the things of the world, so Hari also, with eyes closed in sleep, does not perceive the prayers that I am making to Him." " When, in spite of my many and earnest prayers, He does not shake off His sleep,

[1] Death only when desired.
[2] Righteousness.
[3] Unrighteousness.

I know of a certainty that sleep is not under His control, but that He is under the control of sleep. He who is under the control of another is surely that other's servant. This Yoganidrâ is, therefore, mistress over even Bhagavân Hari, husband of Lakshmî."

(It is not only that Bhagavân Vishṇu is under the power of Parameṣhvarî in Her full aspect, but He is also under the power of Her partial incarnation.) "He is always bound in love to even Lakshmî, the daughter of Ocean, and under Her control."

"It is therefore certain that Bhagavatî, in Her aspect of Ṣhakti, thus holds the entire universe under Her control. There is not the least doubt that myself, Vishṇu, Shambhu, Sâvitrî, Râma, and Umâ—everyone of us—is under the control of that Îṣhvarî of all: under Whose influence even Bhagavân Hari sleeps like an ordinary mortal without control over His limbs. What wonder, then, that under Her influence all other great persons should remain charmed? I shall to-day please, by means of prayers, that Yoganidrâ by whom, when released, Janârdana Vâsudeva[1] will engage in war." Having thus determined, Bhagavân Brahmâ began to pray, from His place on the stem of Vishṇu's navel-lotus, to Yoganidrâ in Nârâyaṇa's body.

Brahmâ said: "Mother, all that the Vedas say has taught me that Thou, O Devî, art the sole cause of this phenomenal world; wherefore even Purushottama[2] Vishnu, who awakens all worlds, is to-day lying asleep under Thy influence. Dweller in all things, Mother, Thou art above guṇas. Who is so wise amongst the millions of Devas as to certainly know that which is the free play of illusion caused by Thee? I am in every way ignorant in the matter, and Nârâyaṇa here sleeps without control over Himself. The Person whom followers of the Sângkhya Philosophy call Purusha, whose substance is consciousness, is admitted by them to be also Prakṛiti, the Creatrix of the world devoid of

[1] Vishṇu.

[2] The best of Purushas.

consciousness.[1] Art Thou really such Prakṛiti? Otherwise, why should Nârâyaṇa, the seat of all consciousness in the world, be to-day made unconscious by Thee? (Unless the Mother be unconscious, how can She bear the sight of such misery of Her son?) Bhavânî, with Thy guṇas, Thou art making all manner of play.[2] Who has the power to know the process of this yoga of creation practised by Thee whom munis thrice daily contemplate under the name Sandhyâ with all guṇas? Mother, Thou art intelligence, which is the source of all knowledge in the three worlds. Devî, Thou art Lakshmî, who ever grants happiness to Suras,[3] and glory (intelligence, patience, beauty, reverence) and love in the hearts of all beings in the three worlds.[4] Thinking even in a hundred ways on the present state of my sorrow and suffering, I find nothing more strongly proved than this, that Thou art the Genitrix of all the world; otherwise who but the Mother of Brahmâ and others, and the Genitrix of the Brahmâṇḍa, can put to sleep the son who is all full of Brahman?[5] Devî, withdraw Thyself from the limbs of Nârâyaṇa and assume a wonderful form. Sportful as Thou art, like a child (Thy sport is sport of will like that of children) Thou canst do whatever Thou likest. Do Thou kill me or these two Daityas. And if Thou wilt not kill them Thyself, awaken Hari, who, when awake, will kill them. Whether Thou Thyself killest or by means of Vishṇu, in both cases the work will be Thine alone."

[1] The Sângkhya distinguishes between Purusha and Prakṛiti. But probably Brahmâ, the speaker, here means to say that Prakṛiti and Purusha are really one, and not two, and it is that one whom the Sângkhya Philosophy sees in two aspects, at one time as full of consciousness, and again as devoid of consciousness.

[2] Nâtya.

[3] Devas.

[4] And so also the Gîtâ says Kîrttih ṣhrîrvâk cha nârînâm smṛitirmedhâ dhṛitih kshamâ.

[5] The son all full of Brahman is Vishṇu under the influence of yoganidrâ. Brahmâ is here saying that this Yoganidrâ must be the mother of Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara, for who but this mother can put Vishṇu to sleep? The Mother alone can put the son to sleep.

Sûta said: "Thus prayed to by Brahmâ in the waters of the one ocean that Devî whose substance was the tamas guṇa,[1] withdrew Herself from all the limbs of Vishṇu of incomparable brilliance, in order to destroy the two Daityas. Assuming a charming form, She stood beside Bhagavân. Upon the Devî withdrawing Herself from Bhagavân's body, it moved. Seeing Nârâyaṇa regaining consciousness, Vidhâta[2] was greatly satisfied."

Again, the following appears in the eighth chapter in connection with the fight with Madhu and Kaitabha:

"When full five thousand years had passed in the fight, Nârâyaṇa bethought himself how their death might be caused. 'Five thousand years have I fought. It is a wonder to me that although I feel tired, these formidable Dânavas are not at all wearied. Where are gone my strength and prowess in this fight? And why do they fully retain their strength? What is the cause of this? Let me think upon it.' Seeing Nârâyaṇa thus immersed in thought, the two Daityas, intoxicated with vanity, became overwhelmed with joy, and said, with voices deep as the rumbling of clouds:

"'Vishṇu, if you have no strength left in you, if the fight has wearied you out, join the palms of your hands, and, putting them on your head, say: "Surely do I become your slave." Otherwise, if you are capable, fight with us, so that we may first kill you, and next this four-headed one.'"

Sûta said: "Hearing these words spoken by them in that vast ocean, Vishṇu, of mighty intellect, and wise to conciliate, gently spoke."

Hari said: "It is the Sanâtana Dharma[3] of heroes not to strike anyone who is wearied or is afraid, or has given up arms, or has fallen down, or is young in age. Besides this, for five thousand years I have fought singly with you two brothers, who are both equally powerful. You have alternately taken rest. But from beginning to end

[1] Sleep. [2] Brahmâ. [3] The immutable duty.

I have fought singly, so that I shall first take as much rest as you have done, and then fight with you. Although you are strong and intoxicated with pride, you are in justice bound to wait so long as I take my rest. And after rest I too shall, as in justice bound, engage in fight with you."

Sûta said : "Hearing these words uttered by Bhagavân, the two Dânavas became assured, and, being resolved on fighting, sat at a distance from the field of battle. Seeing the Daityas sitting at a considerable distance, Vâsudeva began to think to himself how their death might be caused. In meditation Bhagavân, the Dweller in all things, came to know that Devî had given them the blessing of death-at-will, and, consequently, the hard labour of fighting could not weary them. He thought : Uselessly have I fought so long, useless has become my labour, and now that I have for certain known the truth, how can I fight with them ? But if I do not fight, how will these two Dânavas, puffed up with the blessing which they have received, and who are the source of constant trouble to Devas, be destroyed ? The blessing which Bhagavatî has granted to them is but little likely to be fulfilled ; for even they who have most cause for grief do not willingly court death.[1] When even the diseased and poverty-stricken do not desire to die, why should these two Asuras, in the intoxication of pride, court death willingly ? However that may be, I shall to-day seek the protection of Mahâvidyâ, who is Ṣhakti and fulfiller of all desires ; for, unless She is pleased, no desire can be fulfilled." As He thus thought, Bhagavân Vishṇu saw Yoganidrâ, the consort of Ṣhiva, appear in a charming form in the sky. Thereupon, almighty Nârâyaṇa, the master of yoga, began to pray with joined hands to that Îṣhvarî of the world, the dispenser of blessings, for the destruction of the two Asuras.

[1] The blessing is death-at-will, and as no one desires death there is no likelihood of this blessing being fulfilled—that is to say, of their death, which depends on their will, occurring.

Vishṇu said : " I bow to Thee, O Devî, Chaṇḍî Mahâmâyâ, Thou who hast no beginning and no end, who dost create, preserve, and destroy, who grantest both enjoyment and salvation, and who art the consort of Ṣhiva. Devî, I know neither your form with attribute,[1] nor your attributeless[2] aspect.

" How can I, therefore, know the innumerable forms under which Thou appearest ? Although it is impossible for me to gauge your power, this much at least I know, that I slept and was unconscious under Thy influence. I could not awaken, though repeatedly and assiduously summoned by Brahmâ. Mother, because my five senses of knowledge, and my mind, contracted under Thy influence, I became wholly unconscious. I awoke only when I was released by Thee, and after that I have fought much. This long fight has tired me, but failed to tire these two Asuras whom your blessing has made great heroes. When the Dânavas, intoxicated with pride, came to kill Brahmâ, I challenged them in fight in any fashion they might choose. Since then I have fought hard with them in this vast ocean.

"But, O Giver of honour, who can dishonour those whom Thou hast honoured ? When, after five thousand years of fight, I saw that they neither desisted nor were tired, then I came to know that Thou hadst granted them a wonderful blessing in the matter of death. Knowing this, I seek the protection of Her who protects all who are helpless. Mother, in the long fight I have become tired. O Destroyer of the foes of Devas, help me in the work of the Devas. Through haughtiness caused by the blessing granted by Thee, the two Asuras, who are incarnations of sin, have now become ready to kill me. Mother, what shall I do now, where shall I go (but seek Thy protection in this great peril) ?" Thus addressed, the Devî smiled, and said to the bowing Lord of the world : " Vâsudeva, these two heroes can be deceived and then killed. Nârâyaṇa, I shall charm them with arch glances. Thus

[1] Saguṇa. [2] Nirguṇa.

charmed by my mâyâ you shall, O Nârâyaṇa, soon destroy them."

Sûta said: "Hearing these loving words of the Devî, Bhagavân reappeared in the field of battle in the midst of that vast ocean. Then, those two composed and mightily powerful heroes came to the same place and were delighted to see that Vishṇu[1] had already arrived there. They said: 'O high-aspiring one, stay (we are two-armed), but you are four-armed. Still take the field of battle, knowing for certain that victory and defeat depend on fate. The strong ever win, but the weak also do sometimes win by chance. Wise persons should, therefore, indulge in neither joy nor grief in these matters. Enemy of Dânavas, many Daityas have, in former times, been defeated by Thee. But now, fighting with us, you are defeated.'"

Sûta said: "Seeing that the two long-armed Dânavas who had thus spoken were prepared for fight, Vishṇu, with wondrous skill, dealt blows on them with his fists. They also, intoxicated by their great strength, began to strike Bhagavân with their fists. Thus they waged terrible war with each other. Seeing the powerful Dânavas thus engaged in fighting, Nârâyaṇa, with a pained look, cast his gaze upon the Devî's face."

Sûta said: "Seeing Vishṇu thus looking pained and pitiable, the Devî (whose three eyes were like the morning sun) deeply reddened them, and, glancing at the two Asuras, laughed. Then, smiling softly, she pierced their hearts with arch glances, which spoke of feelings of love and desire, and were as the five arrows of Kâma.[1] Sorely struck by the arrows of desire, the two sinful Dânavas, thinking that the arch glances of the Devî meant favour to them, were charmed. They stood motionless, regarding the transparent beauty of the Devî. Vishṇu, too, who knows the purpose of every action, understood the Devî's object, and perceiving that the Dânavas were charmed, smiled and sweetly said, with

[1] Deva of Love

a voice which sounded like the rumbling of clouds: ' Heroes, I have been much pleased with your fighting. Ask for any blessing which you may desire and I shall grant it. Formerly, I have seen many Dânavas fighting; but I have neither seen nor heard of any Dânava who can fight as you have done. I am, therefore, greatly pleased at the incomparable strength of arms possessed by you two brothers, and am ready to grant you any blessing which you may desire.' "

Sûta said: " The two Daityas, who were overcome by lust, at the sight of Mahâmâyâ, in whom all the world find delight, said, their vanity being wounded by Vishṇu's words: ' Hari, what is it that you desire to give us? We are not beggars, rather we are ready to give to you. Know us to be givers and not beggars. Hṛishîkeṣha,[1] ask for whatever blessing you may desire. Vâsudeva, we too have been pleased with your admirable fighting.' Hearing these words, Janârdana[2] said in reply: ' If you have been pleased, grant me to-day this blessing, that you be killed by me.' "

Sûta said: " Hearing these words of Vishṇu the two Dânavas became extremely astonished and, thinking themselves to have been deceived, were grieved at heart. Then, seeing all the world full of water and destitute of land, they bethought themselves, and said to Vishṇu: ' Lord of Devas, Janârdana Hari, you are truthful, therefore grant us now the blessing desired of us, which you promised us but a while ago; kill us in some extensive place where there is no water. We have kept our promise by being willing to be killed by you, and now you too keep your promise and be truthful.' Remembering His Sudarṣhaṇa chakra,[3] Bhagavân Vishṇu smiled and said: ' High-favoured Dânavas, I accept your proposal, and shall kill you in an extensive place where there is no

[1] Vishṇu. [2] Vishṇu.

[3] Sudarṣhaṇa is the name of the weapon (chakra, or discus) of Vishṇu, and means of good appearance.

water.' So saying, the Lord of Devas extended His thighs and displayed them as a waterless place above the waters of that vast ocean, saying to the two Dânavas; 'Here there is no water; lay your heads upon them so that I may keep my word and you too may keep yours.' Hearing these words of Bhagavân in keeping with His promise, the two Daityas devised a plan in their minds and extended their bodies to an extent of one thousand yojanas[1] each. Seeing this, Bhagavân also extended His thighs to double those dimensions. Madhu and Kaitabha were astonished at seeing such inconceivable power of mâyâ possessed by Nârâyaṇa, in whom all mâyâ is seated, and laid their heads on the two wonderfully extended thighs of Bhagavân. Thereupon Vishṇu of great prowess, rapidly severed with His Sudarṣhana chakra, the great heads of the two Daityas lying upon His thighs. Thus the two Daityas died, and the mass of fat which was emitted from their bodies covered the whole surface of the ocean. Because of this, the earth is everywhere known as medinî, and for the same reason (that is to say) because formed in mixture with that mass of fat soil is unfit for eating.

"Great Munis, what you asked me I have related truly and precisely. Wise men should worship Mahâmâyâ, who is also Mahâvidyâ. She is Paramâ Ṣhakti, whom Suras and Asuras and all worship. There is no truth[2] higher than this in the three worlds. This is the truth, the truth, and the truth again. This is the spiritual truth which the Veda Ṣhâstra establishes. Worshipful is that Paramâ Ṣhakti, whether in Her form with attribute or in Her attributeless aspect."

[1] A yojana is about eight miles. [2] Tattva.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

IN the case of the ordinary followers of the theories that Ṣhakti is unconscious or that She is a great Vaishṇavî, we entrust judgment upon their opinions to the Sâdhakas of these communities respectively.[1] Let them consider whether the above two classes adopt their respective conclusions because there is Ṣhâstrik evidence in their support, or because of their inability to enter into the deep and weighty truth which the Ṣhâstra reveals in the ṣhlokas above quoted, or because they have not seen or heard of all this Ṣhâstrik evidence, or lastly because, even if they have so seen or heard it, they do not, through vanity, care to take note of it. The above-quoted Ṣhâstrik evidence proves that Ṣhakti-tattva is divided into two parts — first, mâyâṣhakti, that is, Ṣhakti whose substance is guṇas, and second, chitṣhakti, which is above guṇas, and is massive bliss. By mâyâṣhakti has this vast and variegated drama of sangsâra been composed. In this drama chitṣhakti appears as Purusha and Prakṛiti who, though free from all attachment in their real aspects, as Jivas perform this vast Brahmâṇḍa play. Giving birth to all things from Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara, to the minutest insect, and spreading the manifestations[2] of Herself both

[1] That is, the Sâdhakas of the same communities to which these theorists belong are a superior order of men, not likely to be swayed by such foolish ideas. To their judgment, therefore, the question may be safely left. The theorists are those who form the bulk of the Nâstika and Vaishṇava communities. Nâstika as here used means a person who thinks that Ṣhakti is unconscious.

[2] Vibhûti.

as gross and intelligent substance,[1] She pervades the world. If you and I were to understand the Mother's mâyâ, which charms the minds of even munis, with whom will that Ânandamayî play the play of the unconscious world? Blind man! should you be proud of your philosophical knowledge? False devotee! If, in spite of your being an enemy of Ṣhâktas[2] you deem yourself to be a learned devotee, it is not the glory of the Ṣhâstra which will be in any way dimmed, but it is you who will be liable to punishment. You and I may hate or be malicious towards Ṣhâktas and yet not consider ourselves sinners, but Hiraṇyagarbha Brahmâ[3] becomes a Ṣhâkta, and says:

"O Thou who art all things, how canst Thy greatness be hymned[4] when Thou art the Ṣhakti n everything, asat or sat,[5] which is anywhere in the world? Who can hymn Thee by whom even Bhagavân, the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the world, has been overcome through sleep? From Thee, Vishṇu, Myself, and Îṣhâna[6] have derived our bodies. Who is, therefore, capable of making hymn to Thee who art the origin of even Brahmâ and others? Devî of unspeakable power, Thy own vast powers be praised: and do Thou charm these two indomitable Asuras, Madhu and Kaitabha."

Again, Vishṇu says: "Devî, I know not any form in which Thou appeareth, be it with attribute or attributeless. How, then, can I know the innumerable aspects of Her of whose form even I am ignorant?"

After the war with Mahishâsura all Devas, descendants of Devas, and Maharshis[7] stood before Kâtyâyanî, who visibly appeared to them, and said:

"We bow with reverence to the lotus feet, worshipped of all Devas and Maharshis, of the Mother who has assumed form by the withdrawal of all the Ṣhaktis from

1 Jaḍa and chaitanya. 2 Worshippers of Ṣhakti.

3 Brahmâ, who sprang from the effulgent or golden womb.

4 Stava or hymn in which the powers and doings of the Deity adored are lauded.

5 That is, jaḍa or chaitanya (*ante*). 6 Ṣhiva. 7 Great Ṛishis.

the bodies of Devas, and who has, by Her own Ṣhakti, created this world consisting of things moving and non-moving. May She grant us good things! May Chaṇḍikâ, whose incomparable power and strength even Bhagavân, Ananta, Brahmâ, and Maheṣhvara are unable to describe, resolve to maintain all this world and destroy pernicious fear! Mother of the world! Thou art the cause of all this world, but still Thou containeth three gunas. (From Brahmâ to Brahmâṇḍa) everything is covered with these guṇas, so that not even Hari, Hara, and others are able to penetrate this covering and know Thy true reality. For Thy greatness is unfathomable. Thou art the shelter of all things. All this world is derived from a part[1] of Thee (and yet Thou art above this world). Thou art unchanged,[2] primal, Supreme Prakṛiti."

Advocate of the theory that Ṣhakti is unconscious gross matter or force![3] O man! blundering Jîva as you are, will not your tongue become void of strength before it enounces your conclusions that that Ṣhakti is unconscious[2] whose nature even Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara have described to be indefinable and beyond the reach of mind and speech? By constantly thinking of Prakṛiti-tattva as "Prakṛiti of the world" your mind has become void of understanding,[4] and so to-day you dare call Mahâprakṛiti gross unconscious matter, who is Herself existence, consciousness, and bliss.[3] But have you ever considered Prakṛiti-tattva in the light that "the world is of Prakṛiti" instead of Prakṛiti being of the world? Had you done that you would not have fallen into such a gross blunder as to the true nature of prakṛiti. Leaving aside philosophical theorems,[5] if your knowledge extends to even the root meanings of words, I ask you, do the expressions "Prakṛita-tattva" and "Prakṛita-tathyam"[6] which you are wont to use, signify things false? Or do they signify

[1] That is, God, though in the world, is yet more than the world.

[2] Avikṛitâ: that is, Prakriti in the state in which no vikâra (change) has occurred as opposed to the evolving state of Prakriti.

[3] Jaḍa. [4] Lit.: "become jaḍa." [5] Tattva. [6] Real truth.

things true? If the meaning of Prakṛita be "not true," what will you call Vikṛita?[1] In the Sangsâra there are two things, one Prakṛiti, and another Vikṛiti. That which is instinct with Prakṛiti is Prakṛita, and the rest Vikṛita. Leaving out of consideration differences of gender due to suffixes, Prakṛiti and prakâra[2] are one and the same thing. What is one's svarûpa[3] is one's prakâra; as, for instance, the expression "Of what prakâra is such and such a thing?" means "what is its svarûpa?" Svarûpa is nothing but another name for Prakṛiti. For this reason, to explain a thing as what it is, an idea of its Prakṛiti has to be given. In common parlance, therefore, what is a thing's Prakṛiti is called that thing's svabhâva.[4] Analyzing the word svabhâva we get sva, signifying self, and bhâva, signifying substance,[5] Svarûpa, Prakṛiti, or Ṣhakti. In conclusion, therefore, that which is the Svarûpa of Self is svabhâva or Prakṛiti. Now, tell me, O philosophical advocate of the theory that Ṣhakti is unconscious,[6] is Brahman's Brahma-hood, Ṣhakti, Prakṛiti, or Svarûpa false? If not, on what authority do you call Ṣhakti unconscious?[6] Brahman of eternal consciousness is, as you say, truth in substance.[7] Unless Ṣhakti be false, it can never be separate from Brahman who is truth in substance; and unless it be something separate from Brahman, who is all consciousness, it can never be called unconscious.[6] The ultimate conclusion, therefore, of this theory is that it is the svarûpa tattva of Brahman who is all consciousness which is unconscious.[6] Philosopher! praised be your knowledge of Ṣhakti! Wonderful is your faith in the Supreme! It is from seeing and hearing all this that a Sâdhaka has said: "Who knows that Kâlî, the darṣhana[8] of whom the six Darṣhanas[9] do not obtain?"

[1] Untrue; that which is changed, transformed, or, as it is sometimes said, corrupted. [2] Kind; nature.
[3] Own form; what a thing or person really is. The thing or person in itself or himself. [4] Own nature. [5] Sattva.
[6] Jaḍa. [7] Satyasvarûpa. [8] Sight. [9] Systems of Philosophy.

It is by trying to understand Prakṛiti-tattva, according to the notion that "Prakṛiti is of the world," that Chârvâkas[1] have become sceptics. Different is the method of understanding for the faithful.

The faithful will understand that Prakṛiti is not of the world, but the world is of Prakṛiti.

The expression "Prakṛiti of the world" conveys no idea to a man; for the world is of infinite extent and destined to last till the end of the Kalpa,[2] while the longest stretch of longevity for man is one lakh of years.[3] And he, although superior to all other worldly Jîvas, is yet liable to mistakes and blunders. The only wealth of man is his little intelligence and he is, moreover, oppressed by hunger, and thirst, boyhood, youth, and age, disease, sorrow, and fear. For man to judge of the substance of the Brahmâṇḍa is tantamount to the acquisition of a thorough knowledge of the sea by a shallow-water fish (that is to say, both are equally impossible). An Âryyan Sâdhaka desiring to understand the Prakṛiti-tattva of the world will have to become a slave of the Mother of the world instead of the world itself. He must adore Her world-embracing form by seeing Her reflection in the mirror of the Ṣhâstra. He must form an idea of the appearance of the son by seeing the appearance of the mother; to know the truth[4] concerning the Brahmâṇḍa by sinking into the self of Brahmamayî. Those who have known the matter in this fashion have earned immortality in mortal life and laid down their lives as an offering to the lotus-feet of Parameṣhvarî! To say that Prakṛiti is of the world first of all gives rise to the suspicion, in an ordinary mind, that if the world be nothing else than a composition of the five elements,[5] then Îṣhvara, Devatâ, Brahmâ, Prakṛiti, or Ṣhâkti—in short, nothing superior to guṇas, mâyâ, and the world—can exist; for Prakṛiti is then what the world is. Thus

[1] Followers of the atheist Chârvâka. [2] See p. 134, n. 2.
[3] 100,000. [4] Tattva.
[5] Bhûtas: elements—earth, air, water, fire, ether.

scepticism slowly appears in the field, and to a sceptic's eye the sangsâra appears full of only such things as are perceptible to the senses.[1] But if, with the vision of the faithful, it is realized that "the world is of Prakṛiti," no danger of such doubts exists, for whether made of five elements, or unconscious (whatever the world may be), there is no possibility of such qualities being necessarily attached to the self of Prakṛiti, because of the mere fact of Her being known through the world. It is not necessary that the mother's body should resemble the son's body limb per limb. On the contrary, there must be some resemblance of the mother in the son. Similarly, whether the Mother of the world has anything in Her of the world or not, the world has surely some ṣhakti of its Mother in it. This is the method of understanding for those who are subject to differentiating knowledge,[2] although, according to the spiritual vision of adepts in spiritual science,[3] there is no difference between the world and the Mother of the world. Again, to know the world merely in relation to itself we have to know the world and the world's ṣhakti, but to know the world in relation to the Mother of the world, we have to know the world, the world's ṣhakti, and the great Ṣhakti superior to the world. Although I am imperfect in the world, the Mother of the world is perfect, eternal Brahman. Consequently in order to know Her I must rise above the imperfect existence[3] of the imperfect world and reach that most perfect existence[3] in which all things besides Herself are imperfect and yet all such imperfect things are full of Her perfection. For this reason Âryyan worshippers, the best of faithful men, are averse to respect imperfect knowledge at the cost of a disregard for perfection, or to discuss created things in disregard of the supreme subject for our thought[3]—the Creatrix of the Creator of all created things.

Another thing. It is indeed a terrible mystery that you should, through perceiving the visible world to be

[1] Pratyaksha. [2] Bhedajnâna, *vide ante* [3] Tattva.

unconscious,[1] have come to think that the great Ṣhakti who has created that world is also so. If you consider the world to be unconscious,[1] I do not want to dispute the matter with you for the present; but I wish to know on what authority you consider the Ṣhakti who works the world to be unconscious.[1] On the one hand, philosophers say that " although the ṣhakti of the world is unconscious [1] it appears as conscious owing to the reflection of the Ṣhakti of consciousness[2] in it." On the other hand, Brahmâ himself says: " Thou art the Ṣhakti in everything, asat (jaḍa) or sat (Chaitanya)." [3] In each of these statements both the states of ṣhakti have been demonstrated, but with this difference, that while philosophers say that it appears as conscious on account of its reflecting consciousness thrown upon it, Brahmâ says that it seems to be unconscious[1] because unconsciousness appears in it (otherwise, nothing is so).[4] According to philosophers, the ṣhakti of the world is in reality unconscious, but appears as conscious because it reflects the Ṣhakti of consciousness; and, according to Brahmâ, the ṣhakti of the world is in reality conscious, but seems to be unconscious because that state[1] appears in it.[5]

Now, whether the ṣhakti of the world reflects consciousness or unconsciousness, each of these views admit the existence of both consciousness and unconsciousness [1] at least in the ordinary state of things, if not in the state of spiritual vision. It is admitted on all hands in the community of the faithful that unconsciousness[1] has come out of consciousness,[6] and that the ṣhakti of the

[1] Jaḍa. [2] Chit. [3] That is, in gross and intelligent substance.

[4] That is, asat: that is, otherwise nothing in the world would be unconscious.

[5] The meaning of these passages is as follows: Brahmâ has said that Ṣhakti is in everything conscious and unconscious. On the next page it is said that unconsciousness is a false or mâyik manifestation. Hence it follows that Ṣhakti is in reality conscious, but sometimes appears as unconscious on account of the play of Mâyâ in it, and which Mâyâ also is itself nothing but a peculiar aspect of Ṣhakti. Thus unconsciousness is but a Mâyik phase of conscious Ṣhakti, and in this sense a thing which really exists, otherwise Brahmâ's word that Ṣhakti is in unconscious things is meaningless.

[6] Chaitanya.

world has its origin in the Ṣhakti of consciousness. "The world is all full of Brahman." "One alone exists and no second." "The world is all full of Vâsudeva." "The universe is all full of Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti." "There is no difference between Thee and the universe." "Hari is the world and the world is Hari." "When Hari is both within and without, what is the use of performing austerities?" If all these great sayings of the Ṣhâstra be true, if He alone exists and no second thing, whence have come this unconscious[1] world and the ṣhakti of the world? In reply to this question, it must either be said that the world and the ṣhakti of the world are the Brahma-vibhûtis[2] of that great Ṣhakti, or that the world and the ṣhakti of the world have no existence. Otherwise, the singleness of Brahman or Ṣhakti cannot be maintained. It can by no means be said that the world does not exist and again it is not the view of the Âryya Ṣhâstra that anything besides and second to Brahman exists. It must, therefore, be said that the world, the ṣhakti of the world, or whatever else they may be, all are nothing but the pure display[3] of that great Ṣhakti; or, in other words, nothing really exists but the ṣhakti of consciousness.[4] All which is seen as unconscious matter in the world, full of mâyâ, although it appears to be true, is not in reality so, but is only a display of error.[5] Again, that error itself is a manifestation[3] of Brahmaṣhakti and that manifestation[3] is called mâyâ. Of that mâyâ, consisting of three guṇas, the part in which the rajas and tamas guṇas predominate is called avidyâ; the state which includes everything from pure sattva guṇa to the attributeless Brahman is called vidyâ; in that vidyâ again, She who is turîya ṣhakti above all.[6] and whose substance is pure bliss, is called Mahâvidyâ. Overpowered with joy in love for Her who is pure existence, consciousness, and bliss, the ever-joyful Îṣhvara of all has said in the Châmuṇḍa Tantra:—

[1] Jaḍa. [2] Brahma manifestations (see p. 242, n. 2).
[3] Vibhûti (see p. 242, n. 2). [4] Chitṣhakti. [5] Bhrâṇti.
[6] Literally, "above all Tattva."

"Kâlî and Târâ are Mahâvidyâs; Shoḍaṣhî, Bhuvaneṣhvarî, Bhairavî, Chhinnamastâ, and Dhûmâvatî are vidyâs; Bagalâ, Mâtangî and Kamalâ are Siddhavidyâs." These ten Mahâṣhaktis are Mahâvidyas, Vidyâs, and Siddhavidyâs in order. That is to say, in these ten Mahâṣhaktis which embody perfect manifestations of the Ṣhakti-tattva must be sought the harmonious setting forth of Mahâvidyâs, Vidyâs, and Siddhavidyâs, in the above order. This is the meaning of the above quotation as it appears from the wording of the ṣhlokas. In the Shyâmâ-Rahasya, however, all the ten Ṣhaktis have been called Mahâvidyâs. "Kâlî, Târâ, Shoḍaṣhî, Bhuvaneṣhvarî, Bhairavî, Chhinnamastâ, Mâtangî, Kamalâ, Dhûmâvatî, and Bagalâ are called Mahâvidyâs." In another place of the same treatise it has been said: "In the Kâlî age Siddhi in all the Mahâvidyâs is the best." Here the word "all," which expresses combination, and the use of the plural number, signify that all the ten are called Mahâvidyâs. Besides this, in the Viṣhvasâra Tantra it has been clearly stated that "Mahâvidyâ is preceded by the prefix mahâ." For this reason all Tantrik teachers are of opinion that in the last line—"etâ daṣha mahâvidyâh siddhavidyâh prakîrtitâh"—of the above quotation from the Châmuṇḍâ Tantra all the ten have been indirectly called by the general names of mahâvidyâ and siddhavidyâ. Hence, according to Viṣhvasâra Tantra, Kâlî and Târâ are Mahâ-mahâ-siddhavidyâs, Shoḍaṣhî, Bhuvaneṣhvarî, Bhairavî, Chhinnamastâ, and Dhûmâvatî are mahâsiddhavidyâs, and Bagalâ, Mâtangî, and Kamalâ are Siddhamahâsiddhavidyâs.

In the Chapter on the play of Ṣhakti, we shall attempt to show, so far as it will lie in our power, what appearances of massive Bliss they have in the aspect of turîya consciousness. At present we shall discuss, according to Ṣhâstra, whether She is mâyâ or mâyâ is Hers.

The Mother's name is Mahâmâyâ, and this, too, is a mahâ (great) mâyâ of Hers. Blinded by this Mâyâ

pandits of unripe intelligence fall into the pit of erroneous inferences, and losing themselves in it, think that mâyâ is nothing but the material of the gross unconscious[1] world and that She, too, is mâyâ by whom that mâyâ is held, and who is primal, eternal, and perfect Brahman. If She too is mâyâ, then why has She the name Mahâmâyâ ? If mâyâ and the person possessing mâyâ are one and the same thing, if the seed and the tree are one and the same thing, then why should there be difference of conditions of names and aspects ? In fact, wherever Ṣhâstra has made mention of that Mahâṣhakti, with reference to the part of Her which is mâyâ, it has given Her the name of Mahâmâyâ ; and again, wherever it has made mention of Her with reference to Her Brahma-aspect, there also it has called Her Mahâmâyâ. In both places the root-word mahat is the adjective of mâyâ with this difference, that in the place where reference is made to mâyâ the samâsa[2] is Karmadhâraya[3] — that is to say, She who is mahatî (great) mâyâ is Mahâmâyâ, while in the place where reference is made to the Brahma-aspect the Samâsa is Bahubrîhi[4] — that is to say, She who has mahatî (great) mâyâ is Mahâmâyâ. Just as the larva of a silkworm is both the instrumental and the material cause of the production of thread—instrumental because threads are produced by its will, and material because they are produced from its body—so Mahâṣhakti is both the instrumental and the material cause of the work of the world. She is the instrumental cause because, being will itself, She has willed to create the world in Her blissful true resolve, and She is the material cause because She has spread mâyâ, which is her own vibhûti,[5] and out of it fashioned all things both moving and non-moving. That instrumental aspect is Ṣhakti or Brahman, and this material aspect is Mâyâ.

In the process of creation also, in the body of the Jîva, the Brahma-aspect is Âtmâ and the Mâyâ aspect is

[1] Jaḍa. [2] Compound. [3] Descriptive.
[4] Possessive. [5] Manifestation.

antahkaraṇa.[1] In the illustration of the larva of the silkworm itself there appears another phase of mâyâ. Imprisoned in the web of threads produced by itself, which it thinks belongs to itself, it remains for some time bound by them and yet does not feel itself to be so. In course of time its aspect undergoes a change under that covering of threads, and after a while that very larva assumes the form of a butterfly, rends the sheath formed of its own threads, and with its sublimely beautiful body flies forth, spreading its fine and transparent wings in the infinite sky, in perfect bliss, with an unfettered life and a free heart, leaving behind on earth only its rent sheath of threads. Similarly, the mâyâ aspect, mind, which is bound by the self-created threads of sangsâra and is attracted to and crushed by that sangsâra, controls, by means of self-restraint, all affection, attraction, and attachment of and to the sangsâra, and is even, while confined in the womb of sangsâra, absorbed in the thought of the beauteous lotus-feet of Her who holds the universe in Her womb and dwells in the heart of Viṣhveṣhvara. Thus absorbed, its form changes of itself, unknown to the three worlds; then, in the fulness of time, it rends, with its own strength, the mâyâ-sheath of sangsâra. Blessed with the merciful regard of the Charmer of Mahâkâla[2] and dispeller of the fear of death, it spreads its two wings of discrimination[3] and dispassion,[4] and taking with it the brilliant and shining Âtmâ which then forms its body, the pure and sâttvika mâyâ, which is mind, becomes a Prajâpati (lord of the universe through ṣhakti). As Vidyâ[5] it rises above the universe and soars high in the infinite expanse of heaven towards the seat of existence, consciousness and bliss, which belongs to Mahâvidyâ. The flame of the forest fire is lost in the orb of the sun; lightning shot from its region is lost in the body of the

[1] Mind, etc. (see Introduction).
[2] The Devî.
[3] Viveka, the power to distinguish the real and the unreal.
[4] Vairagya, indifference to worldly things.
[5] Spiritual knowledge; as the soul which knows (*vide post*).

cloud of massive bliss.[1] The broken cage of mind—that is to say, the body composed of five elements—is alone left behind in the sangsâra.

It is this phase of mâyâ consisting of spiritual knowledge which is called vidyâ. By virtue of this vidyâ one reaches Her, the Mahâvidyâ, who is adored of all the world, and is the object of sâdhana. Sâdhaka, he alone in the world has acquired useful knowledge whose knowledge is employed not to earn worldly riches, but spiritual wealth or Mahâvidyâ. In this vast sea of sangsâra he alone is past master of the art of sailing across the world who has moored his vessel in the port of Kulakuṇḍalinî. Thus, O Sâdhaka, the Mother is yours. Am I, then, motherless? Have I no mother, although the three worlds have their mother? Say then, O Mother, that you are the Sâdhaka's Mother. Extremely ignorant and devoid of siddhi and sâdhana as I am, what will become of me? Although a son of Mahâvidyâ, I have, O Mother, been blinded and benighted by deep avidyâ.[2]

What, then, will be my fate? This vessel of mine is drifting down the stream of sangsâra with the ebb of pravṛitti.[3] I cannot hold it back; I have not the power to stay it with nivṛitti.[4] Nay, Mother, the vessel is unable even to drift on any longer. It is a small craft, and has, moreover, nine openings in it.[5] The sea has, by constantly breaking over it, filled it with its salt waters, and has left not even standing-room. Now I shall sink, and that not to rise. Daughter of the earth's supporter,[6] hold me, hold me, O Mother. There is no strength left in these my weak arms. Extend for once, O Mother, your two hands of blessing and assurance.[7] Merciful Mother, turn once and look at me. My Mother, in this vast sea this

[1] Anandaghana.

[2] Ignorance.

[3] The path of desire. See Introduction.

[4] Cessation of desire (*vide ibid*).

[5] The vessel is the body. The nine openings are the two eyes, the two ears, the two nostrils, the mouth, the genitals, and the anus.

[6] Dharâdhara, the mountain.

[7] The Devî's hands make the mudrâs, vara and abhaya.

witless, helpless child of yours has none else whom he can call his own. O Mother, Mother Kula-kuṇḍalinî, be a mother and take me up once into your bosom. Let this vessel sink for good.[1] The Ṣhâstra says that you are Mahâvidyâ, because you can be reached through vidyâ. But, I ask, how are you Mahâvidyâ unless you can save the child of yours who is destitute of vidyâ? Through my vidyâ[2] I sink. Now through your vidyâ save me, and prove that you are rightly called Mahâvidyâ. Let the vanity which this sinner entertains of having acquired vidyâ, such a vidyâ as has led to his downfall, be destroyed. Glory to you, Mother Mahâvidyâ! Whether I have the power or not, you are the wealth which the world seeks in sâdhana.

Sâdhaka, just as mental Ṣhakti, which is manifested mâyâ, is called vidyâ when it becomes free from the bonds of sangsâra and rushes towards the Mahâṣhakti with dishevelled hair; so it is called avidyâ when it forgets Her and is intoxicated by the things of the world—wife, children, and the like. In this connection we may cite the following from the Mârkaṇḍeya Purâṇa:

"That Devî Bhagavatî Mahâmâyâ forcibly draws the mental faculties of even the wise, and gives them over to delusion. By Her is created all the world, consisting of things moving and non-moving, and She alone, the dispenser of blessings, when pleased, grants salvation to Jîva. That eternal supreme Vidyâ is the cause of liberation. She, again, is the cause of Jîva's bondage in sangsâra. She is the Ishvari of all Îṣhvaras."

Again: "King! although eternal, that Devî Bhagavatî incarnates Herself again and again in the manner aforesaid, and maintains the world. By Her is this universe deluded, and She gives birth to the universe. If pleased, She grants wealth and knowledge to all who beg it of Her.

[1] That is, let the vessel sink for good so that it may not have to struggle again on the surface of the worldly ocean of sangsâra. Let it sink in Her bosom where there is no such struggle.

[2] This vidyâ is "*my* vidyâ," which is really avidyâ.

Lord of men! at the time of the great Dissolution[1] this entire universe is pervaded by that Mahâkâlî in the form of a great destructive power.[2] She it is who at times appears as a destructive power; She it is who again appears as the creation; and, again, it is that unborn eternal Devî who at times preserves all things. In prosperity She is Lakshmî in the houses of men granting increase. In adversity She becomes Alakshmî for their ruin. (Here it may be objected, Why, then, worship Her, if, according to men's lot, She appears as Lakshmî and Alakshmî in prosperity and adversity in order to do service or disservice to them? In answer to this question the following is said): When duly prayed to and worshipped with flowers, incense, and the like, She grants wealth, progeny, and other things to the Sâdhaka who desires such things, and beneficial attachment to dharma[3] to him who does not desire them."

Again, in the following Chapter, it is said: "Oh King, I have thus related to you the greatness of the Devî, which is the best of all things which man can relate. So wonderful is the power of the Devî who supports the world. Even as She holds the world under the spell of mâyâmoha,[4] so also the same Bhagavatî Vishṇu-mâyâ provides it with vidyâ.[5] That mâyâ has deluded and deludes you, this Vaiṣhya, and all other people who have the faculty of discrimination,[6] and will delude all such people born in future. Great King, seek the protection of that Parameṣhvarî. Being worshipped, She grants worldly happiness, heaven,[7] and liberation[8] to men." Here, too, the Rishi has in view two aspects of Ṣhakti. In relation to the bondage of sangsâra, He speaks of the mâyâ aspect, and, again, for

1 Mahâpralaya.
2 Mahâmârî, which generally means a great plague.
3 Duty, religion (see Introduction).
4 The delusion which is caused by mâyâ.
5 Spiritual knowledge.
6 Literally, "possessing viveka." This is ordinary discrimination which distinguishes one thing from another in the common world of appearance, as, for instance, happiness from sorrow, and not the higher form of discrimination, which distinguishes the "real" from that which appears to be such.
7 Svarga.
8 Mukti.

liberation from that bondage he points out the Brahma-aspect for worship, and says: "Seek the protection of Parameṣhvarî." "She alone, the Dispenser of blessings, grants liberation to Jîva when pleased." "O Devî, a spell of delusion spreads over all this world. Being pleased, Thou alone in the world can grant liberation."

It is when the Mother of the world, in the aspect of mâyâ, appears as the deluder of the world that She assumes various forms, the variety of which is due to differences in sattva, rajas, and tamas guṇas in them, and it is then that She plays the Acts and the Scenes of the drama of Sangsâra. Such forms are intelligence, sleep, hunger, chhâya,[1] power, thirst, forbearance, caste and class, shame, peace, reverence, beauty, wealth, function,[2] memory, mercy, contentment (inclination), error, intellect, earth, nourishment, brilliance, restraint, and other innumerable ṣhaktis. At the root of all these forms lies She who is eternal consciousness, and who, again, is, as mâyâ, known in the three worlds by the name of Vishṇu-mâyâ. It is a sight fit only for the divine vision of Devas. When, therefore, through fear of Ṣhumbha and Niṣhumbha, they began to worship Her who dwells in the heart of Ṣhambhu, they first of all showed that She was the Ordainer of the universe as mâyâ, and then made prayer to Her by calling Her "Saviour." So at the beginning of the hymn it is said:

"To the Devî who is Vishṇu-mâyâ in all things, Obeisance, obeisance, obeisance to Her, obeisance, obeisance. To the Devî who is called consciousness in all things, obeisance, obeisance to Her, obeisance to Her, obeisance, obeisance. To the Devî who exists in all things as intelligence, obeisance, obeisance to Her, obeisance to Her, obeisance, obeisance," and so forth.

It is here that the philosophers who advocate the

[1] *Lit.*: shadow or reflection. (See A. and E. Avalon's "Hymns to the Goddess.")

[2] Vṛitti. The vṛitti of a thing is the work that it does, and therefore function.

theory that shakti is unconscious[1] have given supreme evidence of their intelligence and learning. They think that all these shaktis held in the body of the Jîva are gross[1] shaktis. The Devas have said: "The Devî who is called the Shakti of consciousness in all things," "who pervades this entire universe as consciousness, obeisance, obeisance, obeisance to Her." The Devas say that She is consciousness itself, but the philosophers possessing so-called acute vision, think that She is unconscious. For this we cannot blame the philosophers, for of course nothing that they say is unsupported by reason. And the reason here is this: If She is not unconscious,[1] whence have the philosophers got such an idea, notwithstanding Her being intelligence, memory, and the like? What they say is, therefore, true. What difference would there be between Deva, Dânava, and man, if what Devas see as conscious does not appear as unconscious to the eyes of men? Whilst the sight of a lovely child makes the milk flow from a mother's breast it causes the lolling tongue of a wolf to quickly waggle. The form in which She appears before a person depends on the peculiar tendencies with which he is endowed by Her. Moved by fear for Madhu and Kaitabha, Bhagavân Brahmâ made prayer to the tâmasî jaḍa-shakti,[2] appearing as sleep, and instantly that sleep, which robs people of consciousness, became consciousness itself, and, assuming the aspect of a four-armed Devî riding a lion, stood forth in the firmament. Philosopher, if you are a believer, if you have faith in the words of Devas, explain to me by means of reasoning and arguments why you understand this Shakti to be unconscious[1] shakti. What shall I say to you? To Her alone I say, O Mother, in the Satya age you destroyed the Daityas Shumbha and Nishumbha by first spreading your vibhûti shaktis[3] and then withdrawing

[1] Jaḍa.
[2] The unconscious shakti, whose substance was the tamas guṇa.
[3] Kaushikî, Kâlî, and so forth.

them, but how much longer will you allow these Daityas of the Kali age to live? Or who is such a Sâdhaka in this Kali age as can, like the Devas, bring You to earth with his prayer? I, therefore, ask, O Mother, when will such a powerful Sâdhaka be born as will be able to sacrifice these Daityas before You, and with their blood make the current of your worship again flow strong in India?

So much about what philosophers have understood. What Sâdhakas will next hear will astound them. The very remembrance of the thing makes me feel as if the gates of hell are opening under me. The Brahma-daityas[1] of the nineteenth century have arrived at still another conclusion. They say that the Ṣhâkta-Dharma[2] is a result of the coalescence between Hinduism and Buddhism.[3] In sorrow for such things as this have poets sung: "What do not people see when the sun sets! Innumerable stars shine in the sky, lights show their power in every house, and even the tiny young of glowworms spread their lustre in every direction." There is nothing in what they (the Brâhmos) say which deserves a reply rather than mere ridicule. To-day the sun of Bhârata's[4] Dharma has, in circling round Bhârata-Sumeru,[5] disappeared on one side, and in the darkness which has ensued Daityas, Danavas and Piṣhâchas[6] have made their appearance. Community of Sâdhakas! this state of things will not last much longer. Ruddy rays of the young sun have become visible on the summit of the Sumeru. She who grants all desires Herself stands forth to reply, and, with high arms outstretched, says: "Fear not, fear not! Sit for one more moment on the vîra's seat of ṣhava-sâdhana in this great cremation ground and firmly continue the japa[7] of the great mantra of the great Ṣhakti.

[1] The sect of Brâhmos, against whom the book wars, and who are called demons of the nineteenth century.
[2] The religion of the worshippers of Shakti.
[3] See Introduction to this book. [4] India.
[5] Mount Meru. [6] Demons and filthy and malignant spirits.
[7] An allusion to the Tântrik rite in which the sâdhaka recites mantras seated on a corpse.

The sun of siddhi for the Tântrik world is about to rise. She to whom the Tantra belongs says: 'No Paṣhus[1] will remain on earth, but only Kaulas.'"

Even here the trouble does not end. Towards the close of the above-mentioned saying of the Devas relating to the aspects of the Devî, and while dealing with the mâyâ-vibhûtis[2] of the Mâyâmayî, they say: "To the Devî who exists in all things as error, obeisance, obeisance to Her, obeisance to Her, obeisance, obeisance." But this expression of truth from the small hearts of Devas has found no place in the large heart of this little religion.[3] A thief's wife may enter into the apartments of a queen and steal her ornaments, but on reaching home she is at her wits' end to know which ornament to put on which part of her body.

Similarly, the eclectic fraternity, which is bent on establishing concordance between all schools of thought, has, by purloining this statement of the aspects of Mâyâ-Brahma from the Mârkaṇḍeya-Chaṇḍî, put it on the head of the new Brahman of theirs, which is partly with and partly without attributes, and have at last found, with utter astonishment, that "The Devî exists in all things as error." Horror of horrors! This cannot be. The Merciful Father can never exist as error; for everyone professing the "little religion,"[3] is unerring and above all error. The Brâhmo has, therefore, substituted the expression "as good" (mangala-rûpena) for the expression "as error" (bhrântirûpena). O what depth of learning! His knowledge of versification is commensurate with his knowledge of Brahman! The Brahman who is supposed to be formless, taintless, and made of all sorts of negation, has nothing to do with whatever is frightful, horrible, oppressive, and dangerous, or with the darkness, sorrow, grief, disease, dirt, abomination, damnation, and sin which there are in the world, but sits still and alone in a formless

[1] See Introduction. [2] Mâyâ-manifestations.
[3] Upadharma—that is, Brâhmoism.

abode of peace, selecting and gathering by Its side only such things as are good according to Brâhmos. Around It the infinite multitude of Jîvas inhabiting the infinite universe are consumed in the fire of sin, trouble, grief, sorrow, disease, and suffering. But Brahman, who is Îṣhvara and Bhagavân, and aware of their existence, takes no heed of them, but in hatred and disgust turns His face against them. Tell me, brother Brahmajnânî,[1] does not this bespeak onesidedness on the part of the universe-pervading Creator of the Universe? Brotner, you take pride in your knowledge of Brahman. But what is the meaning of the word Brahman? The verbal root "bringha" means pervasion. What is all-pervading is called Brahman. Is it possible for Brahman who is all-pervading to be so one-sided as to be associated with what is good to the exclusion of what is bad, with smiles and not with tears, with heaven and not with hell—to be in virtue and not in sin? Our Brahman is a quite different thing; the Brahman of the Âryaṣhâstra, from which you have obtained the name of Brahman exists as well in heaven as in hell, as well in virtue as in sin, as well in desire as in cessation of desire,[2] as well in good as in evil, as well in creation as in destruction, as well during awaking as in sleep, as well in Âtmâ as in mind, as well in prâṇa as in the senses. It exists the same everywhere, in every molecule and atom[3] of the innumerable millions of universes,[4] consisting each of fourteen worlds[5]; It exists everywhere in unconsciousness,[6] consciousness,[7] and in the play of consciousness. It is She who causes bondage, and it is She, again, who brings about liberation. For this reason, after the killing of Mahisha the Asura, the Devas understood that just as the worshipping propensity in their hearts came from Her, so the fighting propensity in the hearts of Asuras

[1] Knower of Brahman; here, a Brâhmo.
[2] Nivṛitti.
[3] Anu and paramânu.
[4] Brahmâṇḍas.
[5] Bhuvanas.
[6] Jaḍa.
[7] Chaitanya.

also came from Her. Just as She provided the Devas with Svargalakshmî[1] for their prosperity, so also She was the cause of the fatal night of Asura Mahisha's death. When the Devas perceived this, they said:

"Oh Devî, who art Lakshmî[2] in the houses of virtuous men, Alakshmî[3] in the houses of sinful men, intelligence in the hearts of cultured men, reverence in the hearts of pious men, and shame in men born of good families, I bow to Thy lotus-feet. O Devî, maintain the universe." It is because as avidyâ, which is error,[4] She can bind, that as vidyâ, which is knowledge,[5] She can again remove the bondage. Otherwise, who is She to liberate who has not the power to bind? It can never be that while the judge will order imprisonment, the jailer will give release. Just as the judge's order is necessary for imprisonment, so it is also necessary for release. The Âryaṣhastrâ is not so blind, so foolish, and so erring, as to be terrified on hearing that "She exists as error." The Ṣhâstra therefore says: "That eternal supreme Vidyâ is the cause of liberation. She, again, is the cause of Jiva's bondage in sangsâra. She is the Îṣhvarî of the Îṣhvaras of all! Although, according to prison rules, a prisoner can sometimes obtain temporary freedom to walk in the prison yard, such freedom cannot give him permanent release, for his hands and feet remain still firmly bound by iron chains. Similarly, although one can live in heaven[6] and similar regions[7] in consequence of having performed works of high religious merit, one does not thereby become free from the bondage of mâyâ. Unless Mahâmâyâ, in whom are the three guṇas and who holds in Her hand the cords of the three guṇaṣ constituting the bondage of mâyâ, Herself removes the bonds, who else in the world can grant release? The Shastra has, therefore, said, "She is the Îṣhvarî of the Îṣhvaras of all"—that is to

[1] The tutelary Devî of Svarga, or Heaven. [2] Devî of prosperity.
[3] The opposite of Lakshmî. [4] Bhrânti. [5] Jnâna.
[6] Svarga, one of the fourteen regions (lokas).
[7] Loka (see last note and Introduction).

say, although Brahmâ and other Devas are Îṣhvaras of all, they have to pray to Her, the supreme Îṣhvarî, for the removal of their bondage and liberation. She is the sole Îṣhvarî of the Îṣhvaras of all.

The aforesaid physical ṣhaktis—intelligence, sleep, hunger, thirst, beauty, memory, intellect, restraint, etc.—which appear unconscious[1] to us in our ordinary vision, are not in reality unconscious. Just as light cannot be dark, so ṣhakti cannot be unconscious. Different parts of the mâyâ-ṣhakti which consists of the three gunas sattva, rajas, and tamas, can only differ from each other in so far as one or other of the gunas predominate; for instance, the sattva guṇa predominates in ṣhaktis like mercy, peace, beauty, shame, forgiveness, and reverence; the rajas guṇa predominates in ṣhaktis of passion like desire, anger, greed, effort, intoxication of mind,[2] and vanity; and the tamas guṇa predominates in ṣhaktis like delusion, lethargy, error, drowsiness, and sleep.

Of these, the sâttvik ṣhaktis are always naturally manifest and conscious; the tâmasik ṣhaktis are always unmanifest and seemingly unconscious, full of delusion, and insensible; and the râjasik ṣhaktis are partly manifest and partly unmanifest, partly conscious and partly unconscious. On seeing the tâmasik ṣhaktis above-mentioned, a person may easily arrive at the conclusion that they are unconscious. But does he never ask himself, Whence have these ṣhaktis come? According to Jîva's destiny, from the very time that he takes a body, an inseparable relationship is established between him and the enjoyment of happiness and suffering of sorrow. The senses, the mind, the function of life and the whole of the Jîva's body are made in such a manner as to be suitable for this enjoyment and suffering. For this reason sleep is as much necessary to him as food. And according to this necessity She, as Jîva, appears both as enjoyment and suffering as well as sleep. If She does not exist as con-

[1] Jaḍa. [2] Mada.

sciousness at the root of sleep, who, then, is its cause? Light in the moon, radiance in the sun, power of burning in fire, motion in air, coolness in water, smell in earth—these shaktis may ordinarily appear to be unconscious, but in reality they are not so. They merely seem to be unconscious. To admit that all these shaktis are really unconscious is almost to accept the atheistic[1] principle; for self-origination of material ṣhakti is the same thing as creation, preservation, and destruction of the world by Nature. In the eyes of the faithful there is nothing really unconscious in the dominion of the Mother, who is made of consciousness. All the things which we know to be unconscious are, to the sight of wise men, nothing but emanations of consciousness from Her whose substance is consciousness; only, by reason of the incapacity of the world which is composed of the three guṇas to manifest pure consciousness, they are darkened just as are the sun's rays when passed through a blue glass, with this difference—that while the sun's rays and the blue glass are different things, in the case of this light the sun, the rays, and the glass are one and the same thing.

In the root She is all-Brahman; in the stem She is all-mâyâ; in the flower She is all-world, and in the fruit She is all-liberation. Brahman, Îṣhvara, Mâyâ, and Avidyâ—these are Her four aspects. Dividing Herself into these four parts, the Player of the blissful play throughout the world becomes Herself mad in the intoxication of Her own joy—Herself taking birth, Herself dying, Herself dancing in Her own cremation ground, and Herself becoming Ṣhiva in Her own corpse. She Herself enjoys the play. She is Herself Purusha,[2] Herself Prakṛiti, Herself the spouse of Mahâkâla, Herself attachment, inclination, and goal, and Herself the daughter of Supreme bliss. She is Herself mâyâ, Herself non-mâyâ, and Herself She who yields mâyâ. She is Herself vidyâ, Herself avidyâ, and Herself the eternal Devî who is the object of sâdhana.

[1] Nâstika.

[2] See Introduction.

Ask the Vedas, the Vedântas, the Purâṇas, or the Tantras, and every one of these Ṣhâstras will bear unmistakable testimony to this Her (monistic) character. In this ṣhâstrik vision of faith a sâdhaka sees the Brahmâṇḍa-play in both Her aspects of vidyâ and avidyâ, and sits on the Mother's lap in both bondage and liberation. The world regards the bondage as due to mâyâ, but he sees it to be caused by the Mother. It then inspires him with love and a feeling of wounded pride. Softened by that love, and hardened by that feeling of wounded pride, he sits lovingly on the lap of the Mother, holding Her hand with his hands, which are bound with the bonds of mâyâ, and, overwhelmed with tender feeling, says: "Mother, what a mad[1] girl you are!" The mad Sâdhaka Nîlâmbara has, therefore, said, addressing the mad Mother: "Is it for nothing that I tell you, O Kâlî, that you were a magician's daughter? Otherwise, why should you have enchanted the whole world with mâyâ-magic?"

Again, the peaceful Sâdhaka Kamalâkânta has sung: "Tell me, what is bad and what is good in you. Some you save by granting them knowledge in the form of vidyâ. Others you cover with avidyâ and draw down into the pit of delusion. Many people say that every Jîva is Ṣhiva. Why, then, does He who is ever joyful become destitute of joy? Mother Kâlî, I, Kamalâkânta, tell you my mind. Some enjoy happiness followed by happiness, while others pass their lives in sorrow." After seeing, hearing, and thinking over all this, one can only say: "I always seek Thee who art above mâyâ, full of mâyâ, universal mâyâ, eternal, pure, blameless, one without a second, and, again, the cause of the world's

[1] As pointed out by Babu Dinesh Chandra Sen ("History of Bengali Language and Literature," p. 119), the English word "mad" does not convey the meaning of the word "pagla," for in Bengali it is tinged with a feeling of tenderness, and persons so called are greatly loved. The term denotes rather a person of amiable and eccentric character, and is akin to the Persian dewânâ.

liberation through mâyâ,[1] the bridge over the sea of existence."

Those who, on merely hearing the name of ṣhakti, leap to the conclusion that ṣhakti is mâyâ without understanding the three-fold division of ṣhakti-tattva[2] into vidyâ, avidyâ, and paramâ, and without knowing the difference between mâyâ-ṣhakti and Brahma-ṣhakti—to them it is needless to show any evidence other than the words of that Mâyâ and Possessor of Mâyâ; for these words are sufficient. When the Mother of the world was born of the womb of Menakâ in the house of Himâlaya, the King of mountains was astonished at the sight of Her form possessing the lustre of a crore[3] of suns, bearing on Her head the crescent moon, large-eyed, and eight-armed and, bowing down to the earth before Her, with folded hands, and voice trembling with reverence, said[4]:

"Mother, who are you of wonderful form, possessing large eyes and auspicious marks? My child, I fail to discover who you really are. Yourself tell me the truth about Yourself."

In reply to this question put by Himâlaya, the Devî said:

"Know Me to be (supreme) Ṣhakti, the Genitrix of the world, under whose protection Maheṣhvara lives, whose substance is all aiṣhvaryyas[5] and knowledge, and who is the cause of all activities and the ordainer of creation, preservation, and destruction. I dwell in the hearts of all things; I carry men across the sea of sangsâra; I am eternal bliss; I am eternal, Brahman in substance and Îṣhvarî.[6] Father, pleased with the austerities[7] practised by you and mother Menakâ, and worshipped as daughter by you both, I have, through

[1] Mâyâ is here both the binder and the liberator (see p. 300). As binder She is universal mâyâ, and as liberator She is above mâyâ. In what sense Mâyâ can liberate, is explained at p. 300, *post*.

[2] Here meaning ṣhakti. [3] 10,000,000.

[4] Bhagavatîgîtâ, in the Mahâbhâgavata.

[5] Qualities of lordship of Îṣhvara (see *ante*, p. 26, note 1).

[6] Ruler. [7] Tapas (see Introduction).

your wonderful good fortune, taken birth in your house." Here, also, She has described Herself as paramaṣhakti,[1] above mâyâ.

Again, in the same book,[2] where reincarnation is dealt with, She says:

"On coming out of the mother's womb, Jîva is deluded by my mâyâ, and forgets the pains it suffered therein."

"Father, for his liberation from the chains of the body a seeker of salvation should contemplate me as blameless, subtle, beyond the reach of speech, pure, attributeless, transcendently luminous, all-pervading, the sole cause of creation, preservation, and destruction, without a second, without beginning, whose substance is existence, consciousness and bliss." "Great King, deluded by my mâyâ, Jivas fail to know that supreme and undecreasing form of mine which is in everything and is without a second. But those who worship Me with devotion cross the great sea of this mâyâ."

Himâlaya also himself says: "Do not delude me any longer with Thy supreme mâyâ. O Îṣhvarî of the universe, I bow to Thee."

In the Devî Bhagâvata, and other books also, the same thing has been said. Now tell me, O advocate of the mâyâ theory! If Ṣhakti Herself is nothing but mâyâ, what is that other mâyâ which She specifies as "my mâyâ"?

The following appears in the Mahânirvâṇa Tantra[3]:

"The Devî asked: What is the form of Mahâkâlî who is the origin of mahat[4] and other tattvas; who is subtler than the subtlest, greatly luminous, and the primal Ṣhakti? Form is possible in only such things as are the work of Prakṛiti. But She is above Prakṛiti, and supreme beyond all. Deva, be pleased to thoroughly dispel this doubt from my mind." Now, if She is merely Prakṛiti, why, then, does the Devî say that it

[1] Supreme ṣhakti.
[2] Chap. xvii.
[3] 13th ullâsa.
[4] Buddhi (see Introduction).

is not possible for Her to have a form originated from Prakṛiti ?[1]

In the Kulârṇava Tantra, Mahâdeva says to the Devî : "He who is deluded by Thy mâyâ sees not while he sees, understands not while he hears, and knows not the truth[2] while he reads."

(Here, also, if the Devî is only mâyâ, why, then, does Mahâdeva say "Thy mâyâ ?") The Ṣhâstra says that She is mâyâ, whose substance is mâyâ, and who is yet above mâyâ. Advocate of the mâyâ-theory ! forget for once the mâyâ of mâyâ and be charmed by the mâyâ of the Mother. Know this mâyâ to be not mâyâ only, but the Mother's mâyâ—seeing the mâyâ-play of the Mother sink in the sweetness of mâyâ. It is because this mâyâ exists that as children of the Mother we strive to sit on the lap of the Mother. It is with reference to this mâyâ-theory that in Gîtânjali[3] it is said : "The Vedas say that all efforts are in vain ; for, O brother, everything is mâyâ. The Tantras say that Mahâmâyâ smiles through mâyâ, for it is the Mother's mâyâ."

Viewed with a little discrimination, the very mâyâ which is nothing but the cause of bondage in sangsâra appears as attractive as an elysium of bliss. Cannot the very same mâyâ, by the influence of which we become attached and bound in love to father, mother, wife, children, etc., also liberate us, if through it we become attached by love to the Mother who is all full of mâyâ ? It is because this mâyâ exists that there exists the difference between the worshipper and the worshipped. Once the tie of this mâyâ is broken, the relation between the worshipper and the worshipped will cease, as much as that between father, mother, wife, children, and the like. A devotee is, therefore, afraid lest mâyâ should disappear, and he should thus be

[1] That is, if Mahâkâlî is, in substance, nothing but Prakṛiti, then it is but natural that She should arise out of Prakṛiti and have a form. The very fact that the Devî thinks it impossible for Mahâkâlî to have a form arising out of Prakṛiti proves that She is more than Prakṛiti.

[2] Tattva. [3] The author's work of that name.

debarred from taking the name of Mother. Although a Jnânî[1] desires to be altogether free from mâyâ, a bhakta,[2] while he throws off mâyâ so far as the sangsâra is concerned, secretly and carefully nourishes mâyâ for the Mother in the core of his heart. Leaving the sangsâra of mâyâ, he enters into the sangsâra of the Mother. All who live in this sangsâra of the Mother constantly sing: "Pârvatî is our Mother, Deva Maheṣhvara is our Father, the Bhairavas are our brothers, and the three worlds are our home."

But lest, through the influence of the Mother's name, which is antagonistic to mâyâ, this mâyâ should disappear, leaving no means of protecting the self, I desire, while there is yet time, to take the name of the Mother to my heart's content; lest, when the Mother and the son will meet, there should be left no opportunity for the son to take the Mother's name; lest there should be for the rest of my existence an end to my taking the name of Mother—the Gîtânjali mournfully says:

"The day passes; it will last no longer. How much longer, O Mother, shall I bear the torments of the bondage of existence?"

"To this sangsâra full of mâyâ you make me return time after time, under the influence of mâyâ. My heart is rent; I can bear it no longer."

"If everything in sangsâra is possessed of mâyâ, then grant me, O Mother, that mâyâ in which the son knows none but the Mother."

"Untie the cords of the present mâyâ, and tie, O Mother, the cord of that mâyâ by virtue of which the fire of mâyâ will not touch me."[3]

"Putting away from me the three-fold fire,[4] take me up, O Mother, on Thy lap. Let me, for the last time in my life, call 'Mother, Mother,' and then I shall call no more."

[1] He who follows the path of jnâna, or knowledge.
[2] He who follows the path of bhakti, or devotion.
[3] That is, instil vidyâ in order that avidyâ may be dispelled.
[4] That is, the three-fold sorrows (tâpatraya). *V. ante*, p. 50.

"My life burns with an intense hunger. Give me, O Mother, the nectar of Thy milk to drink. The fire of woes burns constant and furious. It will not be extinguished but by that nectar."

"O Spouse of Ṣhiva, do not fear that if once I get that nectar I shall not seek it any more. Simple child ! do you not know that the thirst for nectar is not satiated with the drinking of it ?"

Such Paurâṇik evidence as has so far been produced on the subject of Ṣhakti-tattva proves that it is from Ṣhakti that the entire and universal Brahmâṇḍa takes its birth ; that She alone creates, preserves, and destroys it, and that She alone is the highest and the best, and the object of worship to even the Devas whom the world worships. Because of this Ṣhaivas, Vaishṇavas, Sauras, and Gâṇapatyas[1] should not think that Ṣhiva, Vishṇu, the Sun and Gaṇapati avail nothing. As a matter of fact, all the Devas who are worshipped according to the five forms of worship (panchopâsana)[2] are equally instinct with ṣhakti ; none is superior or inferior to another. When Ṛishis have had it in mind to intensify the piety and devotion of a class of Sâdhakas, they have described the character and play of a particular Devatâ in a Puraṇâ, and shown that Devatâ of that Purâṇa to be the highest of all Devatâs. So much is this so that in books like the Devî Bhâgavata, the Skanda Purâṇa, the Kâlikâ Purâṇa, and the Kûrma Purâṇas, the greatness of Ṣhiva, Vishṇu, or Ṣhakti has been described in such a way in one part, and in such another way in a subsequent part, that the two parts seem to be mutually contradictory. The contradiction, however, lies in our human vision, full of differentiating ideas. It did not in the least exist in the divine vision of the great Ṛishis, who were endowed with the non-differentiating faculty.[3] They saw that the

[1] Worshippers of Ṣhiva, Vishṇu, the Sun, and Gaṇeṣha respectively.
[2] That is the four Devas above mentioned and the Devî. [3] Tattva.

Devatâ, whose greatness they were describing in one place under the name of Kâlî or Ṣhiva, was Vishṇu Himself, and that the Devatâ whose greatness they were describing in another place under the name of Vishṇu was none other than Kâlî or Ṣhiva. Questions of inconsistency, superiority, exaggeration, or false imputation, did not, therefore, at all arise in their minds. They revealed for the liberation and benefit of the followers of the five forms of worship, the manifestations[1] of Brahman (of which great Ṛishis, possessed of divine virtue, had direct knowledge), in the course of their description of the play of the particular Devatâs the latter individually worshipped. This point will be more elaborately explained in the section on "Concordance between the five forms of worship." Sâdhakas will, on inquiry, find that Devatas like Ṣhiva, Vishṇu, and others, have been extolled immediately before or after the places from which we have quoted evidence on the subject of ṣhakti-tattva. There is scarce room in the small volume of the Tantra-tattva for illustrations of every instance of this kind. It is only with the object of acquainting Sâdhakas with the learning and intelligence of this class of precocious, avidyâ-born, and matricidal monsters, who give expression to their malice against Mahâvidyâ by calling Her mâyâ, jaḍa. avidyâ, a great Vaishṇavî[2], and so on, that we have said a few words concerning the Mother of the world.

"O Devî, nirvâṇa cannot be attained without a knowledge of Ṣhakti"—this is the conclusion of the Tantra Ṣhâstra. At first sight it would seem to mean that no Devatâ other than Ṣhakti has the power to grant nirvâṇa salvation. But if this matter[3] is understood in accordance with the purpose for which, and the manner in which, it has been explained in the Tantra Ṣhâstra, there will remain no ground for any such conclusion.

[1] Vibhûtis.

[2] As explained in preceding pages.

[3] Tattva.

We shall therefore quote here what the Tantra Ṣhâstra itself has said in brief about Ṣhakti-tattva :

"Brahmâṇî creates, and not Brahmâ. So, O Maheṣhvarî, Brahmâ is undoubtedly a mere preta.[1] Vaishṇavî preserves, and not Vishṇu. So, O Maheṣhvarî, Vishṇu is undoubtedly a mere preta. Rudrânî destroys, and not Rudra. So, O Maheṣhvarî, Rudra is undoubtedly a mere preta. Without the part of Ṣhakti which they possess, Brahmâ, Vishṇu, Maheṣhvara, and other Devas are all without power,[2] for it is beyond all doubt that without Prakṛiti they are unable to do anything by their own efforts."[3]

Now it remains to be considered what is the true nature of that which is called Ṣhakti. But here we are in a difficulty. All Ṣhâstras have at the conclusion of their specification of all aspects of Her nature, merely said the term "Ṣhakti," and, after a low obeisance, retired from the field. How can it then be possible for us to specify the nature of that Ṣhakti who is Herself Herself?[4] The juice of the sugar-cane when boiled becomes molasses,[5] the molasses when boiled becomes uncrystallized sugar,[6] the uncrystallized sugar when boiled becomes crystallized sugar,[7] and the crystallized sugar when boiled becomes sugarcandy.[8] After the state of sugar-candy, the juice admits of no more condensation. Similarly, the consequence of Brahman is the Brahmaṇḍâ ; of Brahmâṇḍa mâyâ ; of mâyâ Îṣhvara ; and of Îṣhvara Ṣhakti ; that is to say, in order to know what there is in the cause it should first of all be seen what there is in the effect. To understand the truth[9] concerning Brahman, it is necessary to understand, first of all, that[9] concerning the Brahmâṇḍa.[10] If the beginning, middle, and end of the

1 This term literally means the human spirit after death and before the performance of the Ṣhrâddha ; in the general sense, a ghost. Here used in the sense of a dead body.

2 Jaḍa.

3 The above is from the Kubjikâ Tantra.

4 Svarûpa : who is Herself Herself.

5 Guḍa.

6 Ṣharkarâ sikatâ, called dalo.

7 Sita ṣharkarâ.

8 Sîtopala, called michhri.

9 Tattva.

10 The universe, or "egg of Brahmâ."

Brahmâṇḍa is considered, the sole and final conclusion is mâyâ. In order to understand the fundamental truth[1] concerning mâyâ, it is necessary to fix the mind on Îṣhvara, the possessor of mâyâ. And in order to know the fundamental nature of Îṣhvara, it is necessary to fix the mind on Ṣhakti. Beyond Ṣhakti there can be no discussion of anything.[1] Ṣhakti is the real nature of all things,[2] but the nature of Ṣhakti is nothing but Ṣhakti Herself. The sun reveals all things, but nothing reveals the sun save itself. However that may be, just as the Ṣhakti of the seed can be guessed by observing the fruits, flowers, leaves, branches, roots, and stem of the tree, so we shall proceed to open the Tantra-door of the temple of Ṣhakti-tattva by observing the process of creation, preservation, and destruction of Brahmâṇḍa, the seat of Her eternal play.

May the Mother of the universe hold the lamp of Self-revelation in Her hand, and showing to Her children, who are living separate from their Mother, the path leading to Her own Self, ultimately take them up on Her lap.

The word "ṣhakti" is formed by adding the suffix "kti" to the verbal root "ṣhak" in the passive voice. The verbal root "ṣhak" means "ṣhakti" just as the word "gam" means "gati" (motion). The philosopher would explain "ṣhakti-tattva" by means of discussion.

This method, however, has little pertinency. At the very outset the grammarian has, in trying to define the term "ṣhakti," found himself at sea, and left the matter exactly where he found it. The root "ṣhak" means "ṣhakti"; the passive voice means the same thing as does the root—that is to say, "ṣhakti"; and the word that is formed by adding the suffix to the root is also "ṣhakti." It therefore comes to this, that the grammarian has explained the word "ṣhakti" as "ṣhakti, ṣhakti, ṣhakti"; as if he has sworn thrice and said: "In the name of

[1] Tattva. [2] Ṣhakti is the svarûpa, or thing in itself.

dharma, the word 'ṣhakti' means 'ṣhakti, ṣhakti, ṣhakti.'"

Sâdhakas will here see that, if the interpretation of the word itself has led to such difficulty, how much more difficult must be the interpretation of the thing denoted by the word. In the opinion of philosophers "mutual dependence" is a fault, but grammarians adopt it as the fundamental principle for safe guidance. The object of grammarians is to state the true nature of a thing in conformity with its use, while the object of philosophers is to explain a thing with a show of learning and intelligence. A grammarian will plainly say, The root "gam" means "gati" (motion); but a man, if a philosopher, will, with a show of keen intelligence, explain the same thing as: "Going is that particular form of action in which there is produced a cessation of touch confined to one place with a view to establish at the same time a touch confined to another place."[1] The word "gati," consisting of two syllables only, is thus explained by thirty-five syllables. And one can easily increase this number by adding to the interpretation a few more "tva-tva-avachchhinna."[2] But what is the result of so much labour? If a grammarian asks a philosopher, "Have you eaten?" the latter will most probably reply, "I have made food to go"—that is to say, "I have made food to leave the plate and be deposited in my stomach." Again, when the same food leaves the stomach and returns to the earth as in vomiting, a great difficulty arises if this action, too, has to be named according to the definition of leaving one place and establishing touch with another. After all the trouble taken over the interpretation, eating, going, and vomiting become one and the same thing.

[1] Pûrvadeṣhâvachchhinnasangyoga bhâvasahakṛitottaradeṣhâvachchhinnasangyogânukulavyâpâraviṣheshogamanam.

[2] Limitations, such as "ness," "ness," "confined to," etc., for which the Nava Nyaya school here satirized display such predilection. It is commonly believed that a logician will in his next birth be born a jackass.

To avoid this difficulty the clever philosopher has added the expression "a particular form of action," meaning thereby that every act of abandoning one place and establishing touch with another place is not going, but that a particular form only of such action is called going. Now, if it is asked, What is this particular form of action which is called going? the philosopher will reply: "It is touching another place with the feet." But in that case kicking also becomes going. One is therefore at last obliged to say that "going" is the name of that action which people call "going." It thus comes to this: "gamana" (going) means "gati" (motion), and "gati" (motion) means "gamana" (going). It is because he will, after all, have to die this death that the old and intelligent grammarian has at the outset accepted the death, and said in plain terms that "gamana" means "gati." But the philosopher will not easily accede to this. He will die the same death at last, but with a frown on his brow. This is what is called having too much intelligence. A philosopher's wisdom consists in puzzling the intelligence with a voluminous combination of words while he knows full well that there is no other means than "mutual dependence." It must therefore be understood that the loquacious philosopher and the sâdhaka who knows the truth[1] concerning things are not one and the same person. The fundamental principle of a sâdhana ṣhastra is attainment of siddhi, while the fundamental principle of philosophy is merely looking abroad with the eyes wide open. In the present discussion of ṣhakti-tattva we shall therefore depend entirely on Sâdhana-ṣhâstra,[2] and have nothing to do with philosophy; for millions of systems of philosophy may disappear from view, but not the least change can occur in a sâdhana-ṣhâstra.[2] However that may be, what we understand from grammar is that, as in the case of "gati," there is no means of understanding ṣhakti with the help of any term expressive of

[1] Tattva. [2] Tantra.

quality other than the same word "ṣhakti." Considering the manner in which the word "ṣhakti" is ordinarily used, it appears from the adjuncts of ṣhakti in such expressions as intellectual ṣhakti, mental ṣhakti, mnemonic ṣhakti, visual ṣhakti, aural ṣhakti, active ṣhakti, vital ṣhakti, etc., that ṣhakti merely takes different names according as it manifests itself in different places, while in reality the thing ṣhakti is everywhere the same. What is the root of the ṣhaktis which are in the branch, the leaf, the fruit, and the flower? What is that ṣhakti under the influence of which these ṣhaktis disappear? And what, again, is that ṣhakti under the influence of which they appear? It is universally admitted that the answer to this question is, that Âtmâ is at the root of all these ṣhaktis. Now we must understand what this Âtmâ is.

There is a class of believers who, when they hear the Upanishads taking the name of Âtmâ, become senseless with emotion, and say that Âtmâ is "attributeless and omnipresent." On the other hand, there is a class of sceptics who take up the sword at the very mention of the name of Âtmâ, saying that it is "a false and fanciful thing." Put under the edges of the saws applied by these two classes of people, Âtmâ has, in the nineteenth century, become finer and finer, and has ended in being something almost non-existent. It is only because Âtmâ has an Âtmâ of its own that it has not altogether ceased to exist. For this reason, in order now to find out the true nature of Âtmâ, it must be rescued from the hands of both these classes of people, kept in a separate place, and viewed from there.

In dualistic vision cause and effect are two different things, but looked at from the monistic point of view, they are the same. That which is the effect is also the cause, and that which is the cause is also the effect; for what did not exist in the cause cannot exist in the effect, and what does not exist in the effect cannot have existed in the cause. The ṣhakti which does not exist in the seed can never

appear in the tree, and the ṣhakti which does not appear in the tree cannot have existed in the seed. A consideration of the similarity between the seed and the tree leads to the conclusion that the seed is the latent state of ṣhakti while the tree is in its patent state. Similarly, all the ṣhaktis which appear manifest in life[1]—the senses, the body, and the mind—are but patent states of Âtmâ, that great ṣhakti of the seed. To say that ṣhakti resides in Âtmâ is to present the thing in the form in which it may be understood by men of ordinary intelligence. The final decision of the Ṣhâstra, however, is that in reality Ṣhakti is Âtmâ and Âtmâ is Ṣhakti. It is but a mode of speech to say that fire has the power (ṣhakti) of burning. The truth is that fire exists as power of burning and the power of burning appears as fire. We in our ordinary vision see only the material and gross aspect of fire.

The Ṣhâstra has therefore called that easily perceptible aspect by the name of fire, and designated the power of burning as its ṣhakti (power). But leaving the material aspect aside, spiritually speaking fire is nothing but ṣhakti. Although the expression "My Âtmâ," used in ordinary parlance by worldly people, means, in reality, "What is Âtmâ that I am," yet, by falsely considering the physical body to be the person (Âtmâ) we are wont to say "my Âtmâ" in the sense that Âtmâ exists in this my physical body. Here, also, if we leave out of consideration the physical side, Âtmâ becomes nothing but Ṣhakti, because no such thing exists in the world as the ṣhakti of Âtmâ. That which is Âtmâ is Ṣhakti, and that which is Ṣhakti is Âtmâ. In many places in the Ṣhâstra there is mention of the ṣhakti of Âtmâ, but in all such places it is Âtma alone which has really been spoken of, just as people speak of the water of the Ganges, the head of Râhu,[2] the refulgence of the sun, the light of the moon, etc., although, in reality, the water is Ganges, the head is

[1] Prâṇa. [2] One of the navagrahas (planets).

Râhu, the refulgence is the sun, the light is the moon, and so on. Just as, in order to express the power of ṣhakti, a distinction has to be imagined in ordinary usage, and expressions like "the water of the Ganges" have to be used; so, although what is Ṣhakti is Âtmâ, yet authors of Ṣhâstras have, in order to enable people to understand the ṣhakti-tattva,[1] often spoken of the ṣhakti of Âtmâ; but in conclusion they have unanimously, and with one voice, said: "There is no distinction between Ṣhakti and the possessor of ṣhakti." In spite, however, of this absence of distinction, they have had, even while establishing such absence, to speak of two—namely, Ṣhakti and the possessor of ṣhakti—in order to explain the matter to people whose knowledge consists of distinctions. Without two there can be no distinction, and without distinction there can be no establishment of the absence of distinction.

There is yet something more for consideration. What is the true nature of that Âtmâ over which there is so much quarrel, dispute, and discussion? Why do we admit its existence? Looking at this part of the question we see that the body of the Jîva is unconscious, his senses are unconscious, and even his mind is almost so, for although the mind possesses a little of consciousness, it cannot exist independently and supported by itself. It is, therefore, a subject for consideration under whose subjection all these dependent things exist. This matter has been very clearly decided in the form of a question in the Kena Upanishad. There it is asked, By what are the senses of work, the senses of knowledge, mind, intellect, etc., able to perform their respective functions? What is the true nature of Him who is the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, the life of the life, the mind of the mind? He has been called "the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, the life of the life," but not the Âtmâ of the Âtmâ; because if the nature[2] of Âtmâ is decided

[1] Subject of or principles concerning ṣhakti.

[2] Tattva.

first of all, the question " By what ?" cannot at all arise. For that is the final point, the ultimate goal. However that may be, after all these questions the Kena Upanishad goes on to say: " Indra, Chandra,[1] Vayu,[2] Varuṇa,[3] Agni,[4] and other Devas who preside over the senses in the Jîva's body were directing the working of the universe with their various powers and boasting of their victory over Asuras, when suddenly a mass of indescribable brilliance[5] appeared before them. Unable to make out what that enormously powerful mass of light was, Agni and other Devas, deputed by Indra, went over one by one to It and were asked by It who they were. First of all Agni said that he was Agni (fire) and Jâtaveda,[6] and that he could burn the whole world. Thereupon that Devatâ made of light, placed before Agni a blade of grass and said, " Burn it." Agni tried his best but failed to burn the grass.

Subsequently, after Vayu and other Devas had been equally put to shame and had returned, Indra himself went, but in an instant that Devatâ, the refulgent mass of light, disappeared. Seeing the mass of light disappear, Indra understood that It had disappeared because, although He was the ruler of the three worlds, He was yet not a fit person even to approach that Devatâ. Thus shattering the pride of Indra, She, who is perfect Brahman and eternal, assumed the fairest form of Gaurî and appeared before the Devas, illumining the firmament with Her lustre. Then, when the Lord of Devas[7] questioned Her about Her real nature, She replied. . .

We are unable to divulge Her reply to the public, for that is Upanishad. We shall, however, quote, from the elaborate account of this subject given in the Devî-Bhâgavata, that portion in which the Devî's reply is

[1] Moon. [2] Air. [3] Water. [4] Fire. [5] Tejas.

[6] A Vaidik name for Agni. The word means " known by all things that are born," or " known as it is born " (spreads) (Sâyana's Commentary on Rigveda). [7] Indra.

contained. From this sâdhakas will know Her real nature.

The Devî said: "This aspect of mine is Brahman in reality, the cause of all causes, the seat of mâyâ, witness to all and free from all defect. Divided into two parts, I create the entire world. One of these parts is Sachchidânanda-Prakṛiti and the other is Mâyâ-Prakṛiti. That mâyâ is my Paramâ[1] ṣhakti, and I am the Îṣhvarî who possesses that ṣhakti. But just as moonlight is not distinct from the moon, so I am not distinct from mâyâ. O Lord of Devas! during the dissolution[2] of the whole world this mâyâ exists inseparate from me in a state of equilibrium, and again, in consequence of the past karma of Jîvas, this unmanifested mâyâ becomes manifest. The aspect of ṣhakti, in which She is inward looking, is called 'mâya,' and that in which She is outward looking is called 'avidyâ.' It was from tamas, the outward-looking avidyâ, that sattva, rajas, and tamas, the three guṇas, appeared at the beginning of creation, and from that threefold division appeared Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara. The rajas guṇa predominates in Brahmâ, the sattva guṇa in Vishṇu, and the tamas guṇa in Rudra, who is the embodiment of all causes.[3]

"In this Brahmâṇḍa (which is but a manifestation of avidyâ consisting of tamas) Brahmâ is like my gross[4] body, Vishṇu is like my linga[5] body, Rudra is like my causal[6] body, and I myself am turîya chaitanya.[7] It is in my state of equipoise that I reside in all things. Beyond that, I am Parabrahman, devoid of form. I have two aspects, according as I am with and without attributes. The aspect which is above mâyâ is attri-

[1] Supreme. [2] Pralaya.

[3] The Bengali word is "Kâraṇa." All effects lie in a potential state in their causes. This potential state represents tamas guna. Rudra, in whom tamas predominates, thus holds all effects in him as their cause.

[4] Sthûla. [5] Subtle body. [6] Kâraṇa.

[7] Consciousness in its fourth state (see Introduction).

buteless, and the aspect with mâyâ is with attributes. Thus, possessing two aspects, I create the world as Mâyâ, enter into it as Brahman, and send Jîvas along their respective paths, whether good or bad, according to law and karma."[1]

"It is I, again, who appoint Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara to do the work of creation, preservation, and destruction of the three worlds. It is out of fear of me[2] that the wind blows, the sun rises and sets, Indra gives rain, fire, burns, and death takes the lives of Jîvas. For this reason I am called 'the best of all' (sarvottama), 'the ruler of all' (sarveṣhvarî). It is through my grace that Ye triumph in all things. Ye are but puppets in my hand. Being will in substance, I ever act according to my own will, and according to your karma I grant victory at one time to you, and at another to Asuras. Through pride, and overpowered by intense delusion, you forgot Me, the dweller in all things. For this reason, in order to favour Ye, my energy,[3] the ṣhakti, which is 'the best of all,' emerged from out of your bodies and appeared before you as what you thought to be a Yaksha."[4] (That is to say, separated from that great ṣhakti, you failed to recognize your individual ṣhaktis and also were unable to do the works for which you are appointed in the world.)

"Henceforward, by all means shake off pride and seek the protection of Me, who am existence, consciousness, and bliss." (That is to say, knowing Me to be the controller of all, attribute the fruits of all works, done or undone, to the full exercise of my great ṣhakti, and be gratified on thus resigning yourselves to Me.)

Âdyâ-Ṣhakti (primal ṣhakti) says: "Divided into two parts, I create. One of these parts is Sachchhidânanda-

[1] See Introduction.

[2] That is, in obedience to me.

[3] Tejas.

[4] That is, as some being of a high order deserving honour and adoration.

Prakṛiti, and the other is Mâyâ-Prakṛiti." Again, when mâyâ is Her ṣhakti She is the Îṣhvarî possessing that ṣhakti. Spiritually speaking, ṣhakti is not different from Her, just as moonlight is not different from the moon. It is the said part which is pure Sachchhidânanda which has been designated as Âtmâ in all Ṣhâstras. The body, the senses, the mind, the life, all are subordinate to Him, all functions are within His control; for all things in the body are unconscious and that Âtmâ which is consciousness is the sole cause of their being possessed of consciousness.

Just as the sun is the only source of all light during the day, so Âtmâ is the only source of all physical consciousness. As the sun is not a different thing from its light, so Âtmâ is not a different thing from Ṣhakti or consciousness. The ultimate point to which âtmâ-tattva[1] leads is, therefore, Chitṣhakti.[2] What we know as consciousness is called ṣhakti. In explaining the word ṣhakti it may finally be said that ṣhakti is that thing which makes able—that is to say, that power by virtue of which the body, the senses, the mind, and the prâna,[3] which are all unconscious,[4] become able to act like conscious things. It is because Ṣhakti is universe-pervading that its other name is Âtmâ. What pervades is Âtmâ; He who pervades all is called Âtmâ.

In the driving of a carriage we see that the carriage, the driver of the carriage, the person driven, and the horse, all four in fact, are in motion. Of these four, only one is independent and conscious, two are dependent and conscious, and the remaining one, though itself unconscious, is drawn like a conscious thing. The horse, though conscious, is under the control of the driver; the driver, though conscious, is under the control of the person driven ; and the carriage, though itself unconscious, is successively under the control of all three—

1 The discussion of the Âtmâ—spiritual science.

2 Consciousness as the ultimate Ṣhakti.

3 Vital principle.

4 That is, when dualistically considered as separate things.

viz., the person driven, the driver, and the horse. Sâdhakas constantly see such a carriage-driving within their bodies. The body composed of five elements is nothing but a carriage for carrying a person in and out on this journey of sangsâra. The ten senses are its ten horses, the mind is its driver, and Âtmâ, that great Ṣhakti, is the person driven. Just as the driver guides the horses according to the directions of the person driven, so the mind also, urged by the ṣhakti of Âtmâ, sends the senses to their individual pursuits.

As the carriage runs drawn by the horse, the body moves drawn by the senses. The mind and the senses are both conscious under the influence of the consciousness of Âtmâ. In all the pursuits of the senses the body appears as conscious. The body is subordinate to the senses, the senses are subordinate to the mind, the mind is subordinate to Âtmâ. Of the four, therefore, three are dependent, and only Âtmâ is independent, all the others being subordinate to Him. There is, however, this peculiarity here, that, unlike the ordinary person, seated in a carriage, the person who is driven in the carriage of the body does not travel along any path fixed by Him; He simply orders the driver to drive the carriage and then retires. The driver is left to choose whichever path he likes, and to enjoy or suffer from the comfort and discomforts of the path on which his choice may fall. The person driven has neither comfort nor discomfort. Âtmâ is ever free from attachment.

The driver may, with unerring discretion, take the carriage safely through the paths of sin and virtue which the Ṣhâstra indicates; but if he is weak, there is danger for him. The ten wayward horses draw the carriage in ten different directions and, consequently, the small carriage, built with five pieces of wood[1] and full of innumerable joins, breaks down in mid-path. Besides this, the hero who has taken charge of driving the carriage is

[1] The five elements.

hardly able to control himself, not to speak of controlling the horses. He has a dread of the two reins ṣhama and dama,[1] which are prescribed for controlling the horses. Even the thought of them often greatly frightens him, and, in many cases, he is of opinion that the idea of handling and using them in tightening or loosening the hold on the horses, is but an incredible fancy. It is owing to such weakness on the part of the driver that in the hunt for happiness in the sangsâra, Jîva so often forgets his aim.

It is here in the sangsâra that the terrible catastrophe begins. Although the driver is weak, he can cast his eyes towards the person sitting in the carriage, and then, forgetting fatalism,[2] one becomes inclined to say: "O Mother! what play is this of yours? The strength and intelligence of the driver are not unknown to You; why, then, knowing everything, have You placed the carriage in charge of such a worthless driver? True it is that I am a great sinner, but for that You cannot abandon me. In this great crisis neither the driver nor the person driven[3] can save himself. I know that I must suffer the fruits of my own karma; but still, O Mother! I desire to see You once in this broken carriage[4] of mine."

"As in Râvana's last drive in a carriage, so in this last drive of mine appear for once, O Mother! mad and shouting, 'Fear not! fear not!' Stand in the carriage, holding me to Thy bosom. Do not disappear, but appear for a moment in my heart, so that I can for once see the lustrous glory of your world-encompassing beauty, filling my eyes, filling my mind, filling my life. O Mother! let the light of that death-conquering black beauty of yours, which has the lustre of a million moons, dispel the darkness of my fear of death. O

[1] Equanimity and self-restraint, external and internal.

[2] Adṛishṭa vâda.

[3] There is no escape for the driven, because he, too, is associated with the sufferings of the Jîva, though he does not feel them.

[4] The human body.

Mother! may I, climbing to your bosom and becoming yours, die the death[1] for which even immortals, regardless of their privilege of immortality, long. So I say, come, O Mother! let us two, Mother and son, together undertake to-day the journey by carriage. Let me for once see, O Mother! your Car-journey[2] in the carriage of my body, in the carriage of my eyes, in the carriage of my mind, in the carriage of my heart. I have heard that there is no return journey[3] in your carriage, and hence this desire on my part."

[1] Of the individual self in the bosom of the Mother.

[2] Rathajâtra, or car festival, in which the Deva or Devî is drawn in a car. Here the human body is the Devî's car.

[3] To the worlds of birth and death.

CHAPTER IX

ṢHIVA AND ṢHAKTI

SÂDHAKA, no Ṣhâstra or community denies that the above-mentioned Âtmâ, who is Ṣhakti, is Brahman. Differences of opinion exist among those whose knowledge consists of distinctions only, in respect of the three words Âtmâ, Ṣhakti, and Chaitanya.[1] The word Âtmâ is masculine, the word Ṣhakti is feminine, and the word Chaitanya is neuter. As there are differences of gender between the three as names, so there are also differences of kind between them as things—Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara are male, Ṣhakti is female, and Chaitanya or Brahman is neuter. As there is no scope for distinction of kind in attributeless Chitṣhakti, the Ṣhâstra has designated Chaitanya or Brahman as neuter. Again, owing to differences in the forms in which the ṣhakti of will, the ṣhakti of knowledge, and the ṣhakti of action appear,[2] the Ṣhâstra calls the Deva male and the Devî female, in accordance with the male or female principle inherent in all fathers and mothers in the world, beginning at the root from the Father of the world and the Mother of the world. This is no mere imagination on the part of the authors of the Ṣhâstra; it is but a statement of what is really true. Femininity and masculinity exist wherever there is a description of creation, preservation, and destruction caused by mâyâ through a union of the two persons. The neuter state, or the state beyond that of a male or a female exists when the aspect above mâyâ is described. To speak of neuter

[1] That is, spirit, power, and intelligence or consciousness respectively.

[2] Ichchhâṣhakti, jnânaṣhakti, kriyâṣhakti.

does not imply complete absence of the male or the female principle; it implies only an unmanifested or undeveloped state of those principles (ṣhakti). Even in the bodies of neuters we see in life that both the masculine and feminine marks are found to be present. In some cases the neuter's body is found to be more like that of a male, while in others it is found to be more like that of a female, the only distinction being that the male or the female principle is not fully developed.

From what the Ṣhâstra says about the generation of neuters it appears that when neither the male nor the female principle can subdue the other, a neuter is created, in whom the two principles exist in a state of equilibrium. The Sâradatilaka[1] says: " An excess of menstrual blood causes the birth of a female, an excess of seed that of a male, and an evenness of the quantities of blood and semen that of a neuter. This is certain."

The Mâtṛikâbheda Tantra says: " An excess of the ṣhakti's (woman's) blood over the purusha's (man's) seed causes the birth of a female child; its opposite causes the birth of a male child, and if the blood and the semen be equal in quantity a neuter is born. This is certain." It has also been stated what proportions of blood and semen mean equality in quantity.

" At the time of procreation twenty-two[2] units of menstrual blood and fourteen units of seed are produced in the bodies of the woman and the man respectively This is equality. If the blood be in excess (that is to say, if twenty-two units of blood mix with less thar fourteen units of semen), a female is born; and if the semen be in excess (that is to say, if fourteen units of semen mix with less than twenty-two units of blood), a male is born; and if the above-mentioned numbers of units of blood and semen remain the same, a neuter is born."

[1] See also as to the process of sexual union, chap. ii. of the Mâtrikâbheda Tantra, chap. i., Shâktânandataranginî; Prâṇatoshiṇi, p. 29.

[2] See Sâradâtilaka.

Even in this equality of the numbers of units the excess[1] of half a unit one way or the other leads to the appearance of female marks or male marks in the body of a neuter; and according to these marks neuters may be divided into male-neuters and female-neuters. But the Ṣhâstra, which notices the result only, has rejected this useless classification and has ordinarily treated all neuters as the same. Nevertheless, although the difference between male neuters and female neuters makes no difference in the fruit, it makes some difference at the root and in the flower; otherwise, the difference would not have appeared. At the root there is the difference between the quantities of blood and semen, and in the flower there are differences, physical, mental, and functional. The neuter whose body resembles that of a male develops mostly masculine tendencies, and the neuter whose body resembles that of a female develops mostly feminine tendencies. Similarly, just as the male and female principles exist undeveloped in neuters, their developed forms being the male and female entities, so both the principles of Ṣhakti and Ṣhiva exist unmanifested in the Brahman, their manifestations being Umâ and Maheṣhvara, Lakshmî and Nârâyaṇa, Râdhâ and Kṛishṇa, Sitâ and Râma, and so on. Besides this, that blissful Brahman aspect of Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti, wherein They are manifest and yet unmanifest and are inseparate from each other, and which can be worshipped only as an undifferentiated mass of consciousness and bliss—that aspect is Mahâvidyâ, primordial, beginningless, worshipped of Brahmâ and other Devas and sought by the three worlds.

We shall possibly, while dealing with the subject of sâdhana, be able to present to the scrutiny of Sâdhakas a sketch of a part of that aspect wherein bliss has its full play and which is monistic and eternal and

[1] The equality is supposed to hold so long as there is not the difference of one full unit.

above mâyâ. Here we must understand that Chaitanya[1] is nothing but Ṣhakti, although the word itself is neuter in gender. To this end we shall quote a single sûtra from the Tantra Ṣhâstra, in which the all-luminous aspect of Brahman is established. The Nirvâṇa Tantra[2] says :

" In the Satyaloka[3] Mahâkâlî and Mahânidra live, embracing one another inseparably. That eternal Ṣhakti, possessing the lustre of the moon, the sun, and fire, taken together and united with the eternal Purusha, exists like a grain of gram. (That is to say, just as the two halves of a grain of gram are attached to one another, so they, too, are attached to one another.) As a grain of gram is covered by an external shell, so She is covered by Her own covering of mâyâ. As the shell of a grain of gram is dark and hard compared with its brilliant and soft valves, so mâyâ, also, discordant with its three guṇas, is dark and hard compared with Ṣhiva-Ṣhakti, full of brilliance and soft with supreme bliss. As the whole, consisting of two halves and a shell, is called gram, so the whole, consisting of Ṣhiva-Ṣhakti and mâyâ, is called Brahman. To an ordinary observer, making his observation from outside the shell, a grain of gram seems to contain only one thing, but he who can see through the shell finds within that grain two halves facing and inseparably attached to one another. Similarly, he who judges Brahma-tattva through mâyâ finds Brahman to be but one. To the eyes, however, of an adept in such knowledge,[4] an accomplished Sâdhaka, who is aware of the deceptive character of mâyâ, there are manifested both His aspects of Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti, all full of supreme love. As sparks shoot from a burning fire, so Jîvas, forming parts of Her body, shoot from the limbs of the luminous Devî into infinite millions of Brahmâṇḍas."

The male and female forms, different from one another, are, whether they appear in the aspect of Îṣhvara

[1] Consciousness.

[2] This is not to be confused with the Mahânirvâna Tantra.

[3] See Introduction. [4] Tattva.

or in that of Jîva, but instruments in the dualistic play. They are different only as instruments, but not as agents. The agent is the same for both the instruments, and that is Âtmâ or Ṣhakti. Again, as in the bodies of males and females, so in the bodies of neuters, also, Âtmâ or Ṣhakti is the presiding Devatâ. It therefore comes to this, that the bodies of males, females, and neuters are alike seats of the play of Chitṣhakti. There is no other alternative. It is an extremely erroneous conclusion that because words ending in the suffix "kti" are feminine, ṣhakti must always refer to the female body and have no concern with the male body.

But, then, it may be asked, Why does the word ṣhakti mean a female only? To this question we shall be bound so far as it will be in our power, to give a suitable answer in its proper place. Here, we shall say this much alone, that the word ṣhakti, meaning the female principle, is Yogarudha,[1] for, fundamentally, Ṣhakti is the same as Prakṛiti, and males and neuters are but changed forms of that Prakṛiti. The assumption of the male form by Ṣhakti for the purpose of creation is but an exhibition of play. At the close of the play of sangsâra, Mahâṣhakti will withdraw this form and exist in that which is really Her own. This is the conclusion of those who believe in a perfect Mahâ-Pralaya.[2] But the arguments and authorities in favour of this view are very weak.

The Tantraṣhâstra, therefore, holds that the purusha side[3] is the cause of the bondage consisting of attachment to the sangsâra, and that the ṣhakti side is the cause

[1] That is, a word which has an etymological as well as a special or conventional meaning, but is used only in the latter sense. Thus, pankaja, which etymologically applies to what is "mud born," is used only in respect of a particular thing—viz., the lotus of which it is the synonym.

[2] A pralaya (dissolution of things), after which there is no creation.

[3] Literally, "part" (of Ṣhakti)—that is, the Ṣhakti of creation. Purusha is not here used in the Sângkhya sense, but in that of the male side of creation. According to Hindu ideas it is the male who creates: the mother side is the support—âdhâra only.

of liberation[1] or cessation of attachment to the sangsâra. There is no ground for the occurrence of a perfect great Dissolution[2] of the flow of worlds. For this reason, eternal are the creation, preservation, and destruction by Her who is eternally blissful. Eternal is Her bondage, and eternal also is Her liberation. In the eternal form of Her who is ever liberation itself, eternal also is Purusha as the seed of creation. But in the case of liberation in the form of perfect nirvâṇa, the Purusha-ṣhakti exists only to enjoy the play of bliss. Waves of creation no longer play in Her.[3]

For this reason, keeping that ṣhakti[4] beneath Her as a mere instrument of play, the Mahâṣhakti, who grants liberation, stands upon it and, lost in the enjoyment of the sweetness of Brahma-bliss, assumes the part of a mad woman, subduing the inactive Purusha, or creative ṣhakti,[5] under Her feet. She of dishevelled hair proclaims the victory of liberation, and, extending Her uplifted hands, gives assurance to Her children, frightened by the dread of existence, with the cry, " Fear not ! fear not !" That Purusha, the creative ṣhakti, is Mahâkâla, and on his breast that Dispeller of the fear of death, that Delighter of the heart, Charmer of the mind of Kâla holds Her Kaivalya-play. It has, therefore, been said in the Mahâkâla Tantra :

" Purusha is called right (dakshiṇa, because he is the right side of the body), and Ṣhakti is called left (Vâmâ, because she is the left side of the body). So long as the

[1] In so far as Ṣhakti represents the supreme motionless Brahman, and Purusha the Dakshiṇa ṣhakti its manifestation (see Mahâkâla Tantra, *post*).

[2] Mahâpralaya. For karma is eternal, and after pralaya, exists in the Brahman in a latent subdued form, which, on the reawakening, becomes the seed of new worlds.

[3] That is, in liberation (mukti) that aspect of Ṣhakti which is creative ceases to create, and there is then only lilânanda mukti, the play of the supreme Divine Bliss.

[4] That is, Purusha.

[5] Though the creative agent, He has ceased to create.

right and left, the male and female, remain equally powerful, so long alone does the bondage of sangsâra endure. When, by dint of intense sâdhana, the left ṣhakti has been awakened; when the left has overpowered Purusha, the right Ṣhakti, and lost Herself in gracious joy on His body (that is to say, when both the parts of right and left are filled with Her power), then She (who is bliss unalloyed) grants highest liberation[1] to Jîva. For this reason, the Mother, the saviour of the three worlds, is called Dakshiṇâ Kâlî. Just as the body of a neuter, which represents the unmanifested state of both the male and female sides, is not produced without a union between a male and a female, so the Brahman aspect does not appear without the presence in it of Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti, the Father and Mother of the Brahmâṇḍa in an unmanifested state.

"As a neuter cannot give birth to children, so the Brahman aspect, which is above the three guṇas, is devoid of the creative, preservative, and destructive activities. Again, in its state with attributes there appear from it Brahmâ, Vishṇu, Maheṣhvara, Sûrya, Gaṇeṣha, Sâvitrî, Lakshmî, Sarasvatî, Gaurî, and other forms, according to distribution of guṇas, and as the male and female agents for the control of those guṇas. It is from the same aspect of Ṣhakti that the creation, preservation, and destruction of untold millions of Brahmâṇḍas take place."

It, therefore follows that Brahmâ, Vishṇu, Maheṣhvara, Râma, Kṛishṇa, Sûrya and Gaṇesha, Râdhâ, Lakshmî, Sarasvatî, Sâvitrî, Durgâ, Rukminî, and whomsoever else, male or female, you may mention, are all aspects of Ṣhakti. Brahmâ is the aspect of Ṣhakti in Her play of creation, Vishṇu is the aspect of Ṣhakti in Her play of preservation, and Maheṣhvara is the aspect of Ṣhakti in Her play of destruction. Sûrya is the aspect of Ṣhakti in Her play

[1] Mahâmoksha.

as light and heat,[1] Gaṇesha is the aspect of Ṣhakti in Her play as siddhi,[2] Râdhâ, Lakshmî, Sarasvatî, Sâvitrî, Durgâ, Sîtâ, Rukminî and others are the aspects of Ṣhakti in her play as the Mahâṣhakti, who is at the root of all Ṣhaktis, and in whom they all rest. If a sâdhaka is a Vaishṇava, his knowledge of Vishṇu-Ṣhakti will remain imperfect so long as he does not understand that that Ṣhakti is not different from Ṣhiva, Durgâ, Sûrya, and Ganeṣha Ṣhaktis ; and if he is a Ṣhâkta his knowledge of Ṣhaktitattva will remain imperfect so long as he does not recognize that the Âdyâṣhakti[3] is not different from Vishṇu, Ṣhiva, Sûrya, and Gaṇeṣha Ṣhaktis. And this is the case whichever be the Ṣhakti a Sâdhaka may worship. And so long as knowledge remains thus imperfect, liberation is unattainable.

The Devatâ I worship is the Devatâ whom the world worships. I do not think of Ṣhiva, Ṣhakti, Sûrya, Gaṇeṣha, Vishṇu, or whomsoever else you may mention, as nothing to me, and as one whom I cannot worship, for all of them are but different aspects, assumed in play, of Him whom I do worship. All these aspects represent the play which He loves, who is the life of my life and the dearest treasure of my heart. How can I dishonour those aspects, the beloved wealth, and the treasure of sâdhana of Him who forms my most beloved treasure ? When such perfect love appears with full force, the heart of the Ṣhâkta is rent, as it were, into a hundred pieces by the thunderbolt of discriminating knowledge[4] were he to think of Kṛishṇa as different from Kâlî. The Vaishṇava, also, is sorely pained to think of Kâlî as different from Vishṇu. No one can be perfectly happy with an imperfect knowledge of the Devatâ he worships. The Tantraṣhâstra has therefore said, with a deep voice which stirs the community of Sâdhakas :

[1] Tejas.
[2] Success (see Introduction).
[3] The primordial Ṣhakti.
[4] Bhedajnâna.

" 'O Devî! Nirvâṇa can never be attained without a knowledge of Ṣhakti.' This message is as dear to the heart of the devoted Sâdhakas, full of love, as it is painful to the community of Asuras in human form, who are inimical to Devas. It has always been a self-evident truth that words spoken by Devas pain the hearts of Asuras. We have, therefore, nothing to say on the point. Just as Ṣhâktas have imperfect knowledge of ṣhaktitattva if they think that the term 'Ṣhakti' denotes only such aspects as Kâlî, Târâ, and Durgâ, which are but fruits of ṣhaktitattva, so Vaishṇavas have imperfect knowledge of Vishṇutattva also if they distinguish Vishṇu from Ṣhakti, with this difference, however, that the latter consider themselves pandits to boot. But Bhagavân, the ocean of eternal knowledge, and the treasure which devotees worship, has, in speaking of His own self, said in the Tantraṣhâstra:

" 'Ṣhakti, Maheṣhvara, and Brahman—these three words mean the same thing. The only difference which exists between them is that one is feminine, another is masculine, and another is neuter.

" 'This difference, however, belongs only to the words. In themselves there is, in the highest sense, no difference between them.' "

We fail to understand the notions which those people entertain of Parameṣhvara and Parameṣhvarî who, when they observe marks of masculinity and femininity in the appearance of Devatâs of worship, thereupon say that the forms of even Parameṣhvara and Parameṣhvarî differ, in that the one is a male and the other a female principle. If the shape of Îṣhvara's body be as fixed and material as that of the body of a Jîva, then of what does his lîlâ[1] consist? That is called lîlâ which, though not really true, is done as if it were true in the excitement of the bliss enjoyed by the Self. Just as an actor has really no connection with the parts he plays,

[1] Play (see Introduction to this book).

so Bhagavân or Bhagavatî also have no connection with the forms which, in play, they assume in various ways.

Their connection with the assumption of forms is the same as that which exists between an actor and his acting. Nevertheless, although the assumption of forms is not really true so far as they are concerned, it is perfectly and undoubtedly true so far as a Jîva is concerned. For, to their eyes, the sangsâra is as much a play as their own bodies, but so long as this sangsâra does not appear to you and me as a play, Their bodies also do not appear to us as such. Secondly, if for the sake of peculiarities of terms, it be necessary to admit that their forms follow those peculiarities, then, like the female and male forms of Ṣhakti and Ṣhiva, or Lakshmî and Nârâyaṇa, the form of Brahman becomes neuter owing to the term Brahman being neuter ; but in reality the thing denoted by the term Brahman is not neuter, although it is so according to the gender of the term. Similarly, the things denoted by the terms Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti are not in reality always bound in male and female forms respectively, although they are male and female, according to the gender of the terms.

There is, however, this particularity to be noted here, that as forms for play are impossible in the state of an attributeless neuter, He assumes male and female forms as a being with attributes for the purpose of creating, preserving, and destroying the dualistic world,[1] fulfilling the desire of Sâdhakas, and that the sweetness of the play be enhanced. Worship of an attributeless being is impossible. The Tantra[2] therefore says :

"The neuter state of monistic existence, which is the result of the union of Ṣhiva and Ṣhakti, is revealed

[1] Prapancha ; literally things formed by the combination of the five elements.

[2] Gandharva Tantra, 34th patala.

of Itself, without any separate worship thereof.[1] The attributeless aspect, which is the fruit of all sâdhana, and in which, at the conclusion of all sâdhana, the worshipper sinks and loses himself, cannot be attained while sâdhana continues. It is attained by the great siddhi known as nirvâṇa."

Whatever form She may assume in Her aspect with attributes is but Her form. That Ṣhakti alone who grants enjoyment, salvation, and devotion, is in all such forms. Now the Sâdhaka may, if he so desires, know Her as Vishṇu, Kṛishṇa, Ṣhiva, and Râma, or as Kâlî, Târâ, Râdhâ, Durgâ, Sîtâ, and Lakshmî, or please himself by calling Her mother, father, friend, and well-wisher. It does not matter whether the Vaishṇava considers Her as Vishṇu in the form of Ṣhakti, or the Ṣhâkta considers Her as Ṣhakti in the form of Vishṇu. When we sink in the ocean of Her substance, which is Chit-ṣhakti,[2] forgetful of all differences of masculinity and femininity appertaining to forms, then Kṛishṇaṣhakti, Ṣhivaṣhakti, or Kâlîṣhakti, and all other Ṣhaktis, will be mingled into one by the waves of that ocean.

That Mahâṣhakti is everywhere the real giver of liberation, from whomsoever it may come, whether Ṣhiva, Vishṇu, Durgâ, Gaṇeṣha, or Sûrya. This condition of unity does not arise without a knowledge of ṣhakti-tattva.[3] Nirvâṇa liberation is impossible so long as all things do not combine into a state of unity. It is for this reason that the Tantra has said : "O Devî ! Nirvâṇa can never be attained without a knowledge of Ṣhakti." Râmaprasâda[4] also, whose life was in the Tantra, has sung the same air : "You assume five principal forms,

[1] That is, the male and female forms are assumed by the Supreme for sâdhana. When a sâdhaka has attained siddhi in any of these forms, the neuter form reveals itself before him without any further effort on his part.

[2] See p. 314, note 2.

[3] The truth relating to ṣhakti.

[4] Rama Prasada Sen, the great Bengali poet, Tântrik, and worshipper of Kâlî Mâ; born 1718, died 1775.

according to differences of worship. But, O Mother! how can you escape from the hands of him who has dissolved the five and made them into one?"

To our great misfortune, our doubts thicken round the very names of the Mother of the world on account of that very sâdhana, with which devoted sâdhakas sink into the sweetness of Her being[1] and are blessed and liberated from the state of a Jîva. One of Her names, which are suspected to contain imprints of Mâyâvâda,[2] is Vishṇumâyâ. It is out of this name that Her title of "great Vaishṇavî" has been evolved. It has been said in the Yoginî Tantra[3]: "Remembering the time when, after the destruction of the Asura Ghora, in the waters of pralaya, Âdyâṣhakti gave to Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara the charge of creation, preservation, and destruction respectively; Mahâdeva said: 'O Spouse of Ṣhambhu! that Mahâkâlî granted us the ṣhakti of will, the ṣhakti of knowledge, and the ṣhakti of action for doing the work of creation, preservation, and destruction. She gave the ṣhakti of will to Brahmâ for creation, the ṣhakti of action to Vishṇu, and the ṣhakti of knowledge, which is the embodiment of all ṣhaktis, to me.'"

According to differences in the mutual relation of the guṇas of mâyâ which consists of three guṇas, the rajas guṇa gives rise to the ṣhakti of will, the sattva guṇa gives rise to the ṣhakti of action, and the tamas guṇa gives rise to the ṣhakti of knowledge. In Her play, wherein She appears as embodied beings, these three forms of ṣhakti constitute the forms of Brahmâṇî, Vaishṇavî, and Mâheṣhvarî. In these three forms She is as much Brahmamâyâ and Ṣhivamâyâ as She is Vishṇumâyâ; but still, in most places, the Ṣhâstra has spoken of Her as Vishṇumâyâ. The reason for this is that from the commencement of creation to the time of Pralaya, Jîvas in this sangsâra are subject to the preservative Ṣhakti. The

[1] *Lit.:* "sweetness of Tattva."

[2] Mâyâ theory.

[3] 10th patala.

preservative Ṣhakti rests in Vishṇu, and the presiding Devî over the act of preservation is Vaishṇavî-ṣhakti or Vishṇumâyâ. The Devas have therefore said in this hymn to the Devî :

"O Devî ! thou art Vaishṇavîṣhakti of infinite power, Thou art Paramâ (supreme) Mâyâ, which is the seed of the universe. All this world is deluded by Thee, and Thou, again, when pleased, grantest liberation to Jîvas." Although as Mâyâ She is Ṣhivamâyâ and Brahmamâyâ also, the Devas said : "Thou art Vaishṇavîṣhakti, Thou art Paramâ (supreme) Mâyâ," because preservation of the Universe is impossible without the influence of Vaishṇavî-Mâyâ. For this reason they again said : "Thou art the seed of the Universe," because "all this world is deluded by Thee"—that is to say, without delusion the Universe cannot exist. It is under the power of Vishṇu-ṣhakti that Jîva is overcome by delusion,[1] and for this reason one of the names of Vishṇu is Janârdana, or He who overcomes Jana.[2]

The world, whilst in the condition of preservation, has not so much concern with the Mâyâ of Brahmâ, by which it was created in the past, or the Mâyâ of Maheṣhvara, by which it will be destroyed in the future, as with the Mâyâ of Vishṇu, which has operation in the present time. At the time of creation Jîvas had no independence in the matter of coming into the world, for the Jîvahood of Jîvas was created by the force of the will of Him who also created the world by His will. Again, at the time of the great Dissolution,[3] Jivas will have no independence in the matter of leaving the sangsâra, for the Jîvahood of Jîvas is withdrawn by Him who also destroys the world. Neither, therefore, at creation or dissolution have Jîvas an opportunity to think or even a right to pray independently. At those periods Jîvas are naturally bound to enter into the womb of Prakṛiti, and to issue from it even against their will, just as a child is bound to enter

[1] Mâyâ and moha. [2] An Asura. [3] Mahâpralaya.

into and issue from the womb of its mother. As from the time of conception to that of delivery a mother remains pregnant with child, so from the time of creation to that of dissolution Mâyâ remains full of the spirit of preservation. It is during this period that She is called Vishṇumâyâ. The Ṣhâstra says: "The child in the womb grows according to the quality of the food which the Mother takes." Similarly, we, the children in the womb of Prakṛiti, will be built or grow according to the things She enjoys in the sangsâra. The best efforts of the Jîva should therefore be directed towards seeing that the things enjoyed by Prakṛiti become free from elements of rajas and tamas guṇas, and full of the sattva guṇa. Customs, principles, practices, rules, and regulations, sâdhanas and bhajanas,[1] mantras and Tantras, all are required for this end.

He who, by satisfying the Prakṛiti of the self with sâttvik food, and being himself nourished by the high quality of that food, is able in due time and with safety to issue from the womb of Mâyâ; he alone is able, after Her delivery, to see the child-bearing aspect of Mother Mahâmâyâ, and will fondly be placed on Her lap. Just as on issuing from the womb a child who has, while living within it, suffered indescribable pains, forgets them all at the sight of the affectionate face of its mother, so, issuing from the womb of Mâyâ, a great yogî, who has attained siddhi, forgets all the sufferings of the dualistic sangsâra at the sight of the refulgent liberating[2] beauty of the face of Mother Brahmamayî, full of love for the universe. When confined in the womb of Mâyâ, the Sâdhakas saw the terrors of the darkness of delusion; but issuing from it he to-day takes shelter in the lap of the same Mother of the Universe.

He now, instead of being in darkness, sinks in the sea of an existence made of light, brilliant with the lustre of a hundred crores[3] of autumnal moons, and beauteous with

[1] Worship. [2] Kaivalya. [3] See p. 57, note 1.

bliss. Rocked on the lap of the Mother by the waves of his emotion and the ripples of affection, he now plays, and sees that Mâyâ no longer exists as Mâyâ, but has become Mother Mâyâmayî.[1] For this reason I said that in conformity with the custom of entertaining a pregnant mother in sâdha,[2] so all the sâdhana[3] and bhajana[4] in the sangsâra are but eatables offered to Prakriti for Her sâdha. In preparing for this entertainment it is only necessary to understand that these infinite millions of Brahmâṇḍas receive their conception from the Ṣhakti of Brahmâ, or the Ṣhakti who is Brahmâ; that the nourishment of the child in the womb comes from Vishṇuṣhakti, or the Ṣhakti who is Vishṇu, and that the delivery is caused by Ṣhivaṣhakti, or the Ṣhakti who is Ṣhiva.

The Ṣhakti in whom the rajas guṇa predominates causes the creation of the world of Jîvas; the Ṣhakti in whom the sattva guṇa predominates causes its preservation; and the Ṣhakti in whom the tamas guṇa predominates causes its dissolution—that is to say, release from the bondage of Mâyâ. A change in the creation which proceeds from Brahmaṣhakti is impossible, so that any desire on the part of a Jîva to alter the physical creation by means of worship of Brahmaṣhakti or Brahmamâyâ is futile; but if the worship is intended for any other object, that is a different thing altogether. Every Jîva is, in the present state, subject to Vishṇuṣhakti or Vishṇumâyâ. The question of destroying the rajas guṇa and the tamas guṇa can arise only in the future state when, by means of sâdhana and bhajana practised in the present state, the sattva guṇa has been developed. It is only then that one becomes fully competent to worship Ṣhivaṣhakti, the Destructrix and Dispeller of the woes of sangsâra.

[1] The Mother whose substance is mâyâ.

[2] Sâdha is the entertainment of a mother during the eighth or ninth month of her pregnancy, so that no desire for food may be left unfulfilled.

[3] See Introduction.

[4] *Vide ante*, p. 331.

Fundamentally, the very tamas guṇa with which, as Avidyâ, She creates the sangsâra, is again destroyed at the time of the great dissolution[1] by Herself in Her aspect of Ṣhivaṣhakti, as is eternal knowledge and bliss; but this competence for worship arises only with the perfection of sattva guṇa. All the instructions of Ṣhâstras are meant for the development of the sattva guṇa during the period that Jîva lives in the womb of Avidyâ, overpowered by the rajas and tamas guṇas. In explaining mâyâtattva to those who have acquired competence for sâdhana, the Ṣhâstra has therefore in most places referred to Mâyâ as Vishṇumâyâ, who exercises direct power in the present state instead of as Brahmamâyâ or Ṣhivamâyâ, whose work concerns the past and the future respectively. The reason why the Ṣhâstra does this is that the Jîva's direct knowledge of Mâyâ[2] must be derived from the present display of Her power in the sangsâra.

By Vishṇumâyâ or Vishṇuṣhakti is not meant Mâyâ or Ṣhakti subordinate to Vishṇu. Such Vaishṇavas as are ill-disposed towards Ṣhakti will probably refuse to understand this; but we say that whether Vaishṇavas understand it or not, Vishṇu Himself understood, in His battle with Madhu and Kaitabha, whether Ṣhakti is subordinate to Vishṇu or Vishṇu is subordinate to Ṣhakti, and made others also understand it. In short, O Vaishṇava! the very notion which you possess of the "dual" existence of Ṣhakti and possessor of Ṣhakti, or of mâyâ and the wielder of mâyâ, is erroneous. In reality the aspect of Vishṇu is but an aspect assumed by Her who is Mâyâ or Ṣhakti.

Again, some communities, proud of their Vaishṇavism, are nowadays heard to say that Bhagavatî is a great Vaishṇavî. "To serve as if it were one's own self" (to serve God as one would serve oneself) is the conclusion (idea) of the Vaishṇava ṣhâstra. We have

[1] Mahâpralaya. [2] Mâyâ Tattva.

therefore nothing to say to the Vaishṇava who holds that Bhagavatî is a great Vaishṇavî, because this notion merely bespeaks his own nature. There is, moreover, this delightful inconsequence, that while the Mother is considered a Vaishṇavî the Father is a spiritual brother.[1] Blessed be thou, O Vaishṇava! Bravo to thy conclusion! Living in the society of men, you alone have realized the beauty of this relationship. If you have such a strong desire to call Mahâdeva your spiritual brother in order to create a precedent (which they may follow) for your own community, then why not treat every one equally, from the Mother of Brahmâ, Vishṇu and Maheṣhvara to the mother of the smallest insect? Let the Ṣhâkta and the Vaishṇava unite their voices in singing: "Jîva is Ṣhiva! Ṣhiva is Jîva!" Then, why Mahâdeva alone? All Devas, Adhidevas,[2] Upadevas,[3] Dânavas,[4] Mânavas,[5] and all the creatures in the Brahmâṇḍa will appear to be nothing but the children of Jagaddhâtrî,[6] who brings forth endless millions of worlds.[7]

There will then exist no other relationship but that of the spirit, so that the three worlds will then be full of spiritual brothers only. Can you tell me, O Vaishṇava! when, by the blessings of Vaishṇavas and the grace of Vishṇu, the day will come on which you will realize Ṣhakti, not as Vishṇumâyâ, but as Vishṇu? Ṣhakti is called Vaishṇavî, not because She is possessed by Vishṇu, but because She is progenitrix of Vishṇu. Gangâ[8] is called Bhâgîrathî because She was worshipped and brought down by Bhagîratha. The reason for Her being called after the name of Bhagîratha is not that She, whom even Brahmâ and other Devas are rarely able to worship, is under the protection of Bhagîratha, but that, urged by the tender desire " to be called the mother of

[1] That is, Ṣhiva the Father must be a Vaishṇava if the Devî be Vaishṇavî; and as Vaishṇava he is a ṣpiritual brother—that is, one of the same sect.

[2] Ruling Devas.

[3] Subordinate Devas.

[4] Demonic spirits.

[5] Men.

[6] Devî as supporter of the universe.

[7] Brahmâṇḍas.

[8] The River Ganges.

Bhagîratha," and in order to immortalize in the three worlds the immense glory of Bhagîratha, that crest-gem of devotees, the Mother of the universe, dweller on the head of Ṣhangkara, and dispeller of the sorrows of sangsâra, has proclaimed to the three worlds, out of love for Her devotees, the greatness of devotion shown to Her, by the adoption of the name of Bhâgîrathî.

Similarly, in spite of Her being the progenitrix of Brahmâ and other Devas, and Mother of the universe, She has proclaimed Her ṣhaktis of creation, preservation, and destruction by adopting the names of Brahmâṇî, Vaishṇavî, and Maheṣhvarî. She was born as Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara and was, again, Herself their Mother. If you call Her dependent, She is dependent on Herself alone. If you call Her patroness, She patronizes none but Herself. There is, therefore, no possibility of Her being injured by anything which may be said about Her. What, however, we can do is to march along the path to hell. So I say, O Sâdhaka, beware! save yourself from all these sinful notions.

Another of the names of the Mother is Brahmamayî. This, too, gives to the detractors an opportunity to object that She who is Brahman can never be Brahmamayî. If She is Brahmânî, why, then, is She called Brahmamayî? She might very well be called Brahman. In reply to this objection we shall not, after recitation of the whole of Râmâyaṇa, proceed to give an account of Sîtâ.[1] It is no wonder that man, whose nature it is to err, will be deluded by Her mâyâ, which sometimes deludes even Brahmâ and other Devas ardently devoted to Her. Sâdhakas who are inquirers after spiritual knowledge[2] should, however, know that just as beads are made of gold,[3] images are made of earth,[4] Gangâ[5] is made of water,[6] and the sun is made of light and heat,[7] so the

[1] That is to say, to repeat which is a useless task.
[2] *Lit.:* "inquirers of tattva."
[3] Svarṇamayî.
[4] Mṛinmayî.
[5] The River Ganges.
[6] Jalamayî.
[7] Tejomayî.

substance of the Mother of the world is Brahman.[1] The word Brahmamayî has been formed by adding the suffix mayaṭ to the word Brahman in the sense of "Own form."[2]

What is Her "own form" that is Brahman; or what is Brahman's "own form" that is She. Even while embodied Brahman She is, in reality, above all guṇas, and so She is called Brahmamayî. Her hands, feet, and other limbs, her raiments, ornaments, and conveyances, the members of Her family, etc., are all Brahman's "own form," and so She is Brahmamayî. The meaning of the term Brahmamayî is not "One who pervades Brahman,"[3] but "One who is Brahman."[4] Brahman pervades the universe, but the Âryya Ṣhâstra makes no mention of anything which can pervade Brahman.

From all that we have so far said on the subject of ṣhakti-tattva, Sâdhakas have surely come to understand that the ṣhakti to whom ill-disposed Ṣhaktas and Vaishṇavas refer is not the same Ṣhakti as forms the subject of the Tantraṣhâstra.

Râdhâ, Lakshmî, Sîtâ, Rukminî, Sâvitrî, Sarasvatî, Gangâ, Gaurî, Gaṇeṣha,[5] Sûrya, Ṣhiva, Vishṇu, Indra, Chandra, Vâyu, Varuṇa, Deva, Dânava,[6] Gandharva, Kinnara, Yaksha,[7] Raksha,[8] man, beast, bird, insect, and the endless universe which is full of all such moving and motionless things is Ṣhakti in substance. Again, Râdhâ, Lakshmî, Sîtâ, Satî, and other manifestations of Brahman, are but the Kaivalya play[9] of Mahâ-

[1] Brahmamayî. [2] Svarûpa.

[3] Brahmavyâpinî. [4] Brahmarûpinî.

[5] Râdhâ, beloved of Kṛishṇa; the Devî Lakshmî; wife of Râma; wife of Kṛishṇa; wife of Brahmâ; the Devî Sarasvatî; the River Ganges (considered as Devî); the elephant-headed Deva, son of Ṣhiva.

[6] The sun; Ṣhiva; Vishṇu; Lord of the Devas; the moon as a Deva; the Lord of air; the Lord of waters; Deva; and demonic spirit.

[7] Devayonîs of those names (see Introduction).

[8] Demonic beings.

[9] That is, the play of unity in diversity. Râdhâ, Lakshmî, Sîtâ, and Satî are Mahâṣhakti, and so one with Her.

ṣhakti. In the quotation which we have already made in connection with the destruction of thousand-headed Râvaṇa, Sâdhakas have obtained a notion of Sîtâtattva.[1]

Here we shall make a few quotations to illustrate the manner in which the Ṣhâstra supports[2] the contention of the Vaishṇavas that Râdhikâ is "Ṣhrîkṛishṇa's handmaid," and their practice of worshipping Râdhikâ with articles of food first offered to Ṣhrîkṛishṇa. From this play of the waves of ṣhâstrik authority, Sâdhakas will form a conception of the vast expanse and grave solemnity of the sea of the nectar of Râdhâtattva.[3]

In the Devî Bhâgavata[4] Ṣhrî Nârâyaṇa says to Nârada: "In the region of Goloka[5] Râdhikâ was first of all worshipped by Kṛishṇa, the Paramâtmâ, within the Râsamaṇḍala[6] on the full-moon day in the month of Kârtik. Next, under the command of Bhagavân, She was worshipped by the company of herdswomen and cowherds, their boys and girls, the cows, and Surabhi, the queen of the race of cows. Since Her worship by the inhabitants of Goloka, Brahmâ, Vishṇu, Maheṣhvara, and other Devas, and the Munis inhabiting the city of immortals ever worship and adore Her with devotion, with flowers and incense. On earth She was first worshipped by Suyajna in the sacred field of Bhâratavarsha, under the direction of Bhagavân Mahâdeva. Subsequently, under the command of Ṣhrîkṛishṇa, the Paramâtmâ, the inhabitants of the three worlds began to worship Her."

In the second Râtra[7] of the Nâradapancharâtra it is said: "Just as Ṣhrîkṛishṇa, who is Brahman in reality, is above Prakṛiti and free from attachment,[8] so Râdhikâ, who is also Brahman in reality, is above Prakṛiti and

[1] The subject of Sîtâ, wife of Râma.
[2] That is, does not support.
[3] The subject of Râdhâ.
[4] Chap. ix.
[5] Kṛishṇa's heaven (see Vishṇu Purâṇa, I. iii.).
[6] The enclosure within which the râsalîlâ was performed.
[7] Chap. ii.
[8] Nirlipta.

free from attachment. Just as, for the sake of work to be done, He at times assumes forms with attributes, so Mahâprakṛiti Râdhikâ also, for the same purpose, at times assumes the form of gross Prakṛiti. In gross form that subtle Prakṛiti lives, by the force of yoga, in the life,[1] the tongue, the intellect, and the mind of Shrîkṛishṇa, the Parameṣhvara. Nârada! at times She seems to appear in, and disappear from, the world formed of mâyâ; but in reality She neither takes birth, nor is dependent on the action of any other being or person. Like Bhagavân Hari, Bhagavatî Râdhikâ also is eternal and truth in substance. O Muni! the Mahâṣhakti who presides over the life of Bhagavân Ṣhrîkṛishṇa appears as Râdhâ, and She who presides over His tongue is Sarasvatî Herself. She who presides over His intellect is Durgâ, the destroyer of evil, who has now incarnated Herself as the daughter of Himâlaya, the Mountain-king, the destroyer of the enemies of the Devas, who, by appearing in the form of the mass of energy[2] of all the Devas, crushed the race of Daityas,[3] and gave back to the Devas the sovereignty of the kingdom of heaven; She it is who holds the three worlds, who appears as hunger, thirst, mercy, sleep, contentment, nourishment, forgiveness, shame, and error, who rules over all Jivas, and who, in particular, presides as Sâvitrî over the hearts of Brâhmaṇas. It was from the left side of Râdhikâ that Mahâlakshmî appeared, She who is the presiding Devatâ over the wealth,[4] of Îṣhvara. From a part of that Mahâlakshmî appeared the sea-born[5] Kamalâ, who arose from out of the sea of milk what time it was churned. It is She who is the earthly Lakshmî on earth, and the spouse of Nârâyaṇa who lies upon the sea of milk. The heavenly Lakshmî also, who presides over the dwellings of Indra and other Devas, appeared from

1 Prâṇa, the vital principle. 2 Tejas. 3 Titans.
4 Aiṣhvaryya, that which constitutes Îṣhvara-hood (see p. 26, note 1).
5 Sindhuvâlâ, who came out of the sea.

a part of Devî Mahâlakshmî who Herself is the spouse of the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha. Sâvitrî, who dwells in the Brahmaloka, is the wife of Brahmâ. At the command of Bhagavân, Sarasvatî had already divided Herself into two parts. The first part remained as Sarasvatî and the second became Bhâratî.[1] Both were accomplished yoginîs by dint of yoga. Of them, Bhâratî is the wife of Brahmâ, and Sarasvatî is the spouse of Vishṇu. Parameṣhvarî Râdhikâ, the mistress of the play of Râsa,[2] is the presiding Devatâ over the Râsa-circle, and that eternal Brahmasanâtanî incarnated Herself in full in the region of Vṛindâvana.[3] Within the Râsa-circle She was the principal actress of the play of Râsa, making use of the occasion of the love-play to show Her love to devotees. Bhagavatî ate betel chewed by Bhagavân, and Bhagavân ate betel chewed by Bhagavatî (in order to show their love for devotees, or to show that both of them were, in fact, the same). In reality both of them have the same body. (In outward vision they appear to possess different bodies, to enhance the sweetness of their play, but in reality no such difference exists.) The difference between them is like the difference between milk and its whiteness (that is to say, just as the substance milk is an aggregate of such constituent qualities as whiteness, liquidity, sweetness, and so forth, so the substance Brahman is an aggregate of existence, consciousness, bliss, and the like. Just as the state of milk cannot be determined if we omit any of its qualities, such as whiteness, liquidity, sweetness, and so forth, so Brahmanhood cannot be determined if we omit any of its qualities, such as ṣhakti, possessor of ṣhakti, ṣhakti vibhûti,[4] and the like. Just as substantially no difference exists between the constituent parts of a thing, although, according to the method of linguistic exposition, differences are imagined to exist between

[1] Sâvitrî.
[2] See p. 337, note 6, *ante*.
[3] The town Vṛindâvana, in the North-West Provinces.
[4] Manifestation of Ṣhakti (see p. 242, note 2).

them, and different names are assigned to them, so actually no difference exists between Râdhâ and Kṛishṇa, although they are different in the aspects they assume in play. Brahman is both Râdhâ and Kṛishṇa. She who is Râdhikâ is also Kṛishṇa, and He who is Kṛishṇa is also Râdhikâ). Those who distinguish between Râdhâ and Kṛishṇa, who constitute one non-differentiable, non-dualistic supreme Being,[1] will not escape the torments of hell so long as the sun and moon will endure. The heinous bodies of those who make a distinction between them, and, failing to understand the play of Brahman, speak ill of Râdhikâ, the supreme Prakṛiti, will be boiled in the Kumbhîpâka hell so long as Brahmâ lives."

Again, in the sixth Chapter it is said: "First utter the name of Râdhâ and next that of Kṛishṇa or Mâdhava.[2] Whoever reads in the opposite way surely commits a sin equal to that of murdering a Brâhmana. Râdhikâ is the Mother and Ṣhrîkṛishṇa is the Father of the universe.[3] Although both are the same in substance, yet in the incarnation They take in play, and, according to human[4] custom, the Mother is the object of a hundred times greater glory, adoration, and worship[5] than the father."

It is in order to maintain this glory that Ṣhâstra has enjoined men to take the name of Râdhikâ first and that of Ṣhrîkṛishṇa next. It is natural to expect that because the mother is the wife of the father her position will be less glorious than his, according to men's notions; but here custom is inspired by dharma,[6] and is, consequently, approved by the Ṣhâstra. Not only the

[1] Tattva.

[2] Mâdhava is one of the names of Kṛishṇa as destroyer of the demon Madhu.

[3] The mother's name is always placed first.

[4] Laukika.

[5] See *post*. The child should regard its mother and father as two visible incarnate Deities (Mahânirvaṇa Tantra, chap. viii., verse 25).

[6] A religious spirit.

custom of men, but even the Ṣhâstra itself says: 'In glory the mother surpasses the father a thousand times.' The reason, also, for this has been stated in the Ṣhâstra. It says that: 'The mother is an object of greater glory than the father because she holds the child in her womb and nourishes it.' He is the Guru of the world by whom the world is educated and initiated. Prakṛiti tests this education and initiation of the world—that is to say, the Guru can teach only what the Jîvas[1] (nature) can accept. Prakṛiti, therefore, has the charge of testing the passion or dispassion for education.

This Prakṛiti, the examiner of the world, however, has also to receive education and initiation from Mother Mahâprakṛiti.[2] For ten months and ten days before its appearance in the world of men the child's prakṛiti is initiated in the mantra which is contained in the mother's body, food, senses, and mind, and educated therein. It has already been shown that in the proportion of seed and blood the quantity of blood, which is the mother's portion, is the greater. For this reason the mother's contribution to the Jîva's body is larger than the father's. At the very outset this gives to the mother superiority to the father. Next comes the pregnancy for ten months and ten days. During this period the record of the Jîva's destiny lies engraved on the foundations of the mother's body. The child's body is built and developed according to her thoughts, her doings, and the humours[3] and blood flowing in her body.

After this, again, for five years the child drinks the mother's milk. Taking all these matters together, it appears that the child's indebtedness to the mother permeates his veins, arteries, bones, marrow, vital airs, body, senses, mind, and, indeed, every molecule and atom from the tip of his toe to the top of his head. His indebtedness to his father is only in respect of the act of

[1] Prakṛiti. [2] The greater prakṛiti. [3] Râsa.

procreation. This is the law of nature. The child's indebtedness to his father for acts done subsequent to procreation, such as performances of the ten sangskâras,[1] education, maintenance, and so forth, is not such as must naturally appertain to the father, for in his absence these acts may be done by any other guardian. For this reason it does not matter very much to the child if the father dies after procreation ; but if the mother dies after conception, not even the united power of the three worlds can supply her place.

"Under the weight of this great and solemn glory the Ṣhâstras ordaining household duties have, with heads bowed down, said : 'The mother is a thousand times more glorious and more worshipful than the father.' Such being the decision of even such Ṣhâstras as deal principally with domestic duties, it need hardly be said that in the spiritual[2] vision of the Tantra Ṣhâstra, which deals principally with sâdhana dharma,[3] there is in this no difference between the worldly mother and the spiritual Mother (or Ṣhakti). In the Chapter on Ṣhaktilîlâ[4] we shall try, as far as it will be in our power, to show how the principle[5] (of the superiority) of human motherhood is applicable to Râdhâ, the embodiment of the unattached[6] Brahman, and what the Tantra Ṣhâstra says on the subject. Here we desist, for to do so would be to digress. For the present, the very notion under which Sâdhakas know Her as Mother will enable them to understand this much, that the name of Râdhâ should be taken first and then that of Kṛishṇa, and that a reversal of this order is faulty worship in their sâdhana for truth.[7]

"Those who speak ill of Râdhikâ either through perversity of intellect caused by unavoidable fate, or through

[1] Sacraments (see Introduction). [2] Tattva.
[3] Rules as to ritual practice, worship, etc.
[4] The play of Ṣhakti. [5] Tattva.
[6] Nirlipta. The supreme inactive Brahman, unaffected by and unattached to the Brahmâṇḍa (universe). [7] Tattva.

blindness due to ill-feeling towards Vâmâchâra,[1] or through ignorance or sin, do not know that Râdhikâ is an aspect of Hari's own self, and that an enemy of Râdhâ is also an enemy of Hari. In the next world the place of such a man will be in a cauldron of boiling oil in the midst of the Kumbhîpâka hell for the life-time of a hundred Brahmâs, and in this world the extinction of his progeny and his own total ruin is inevitable."

"(So long as that detractor of ṣhakti shall not die), he will fall (from his own dharma[2] through unrighteousness),[3] and be deprived of the power to rise on account of malice against Ṣhakti; he will be prostrate on earth and suffer from endless disease and perils at every step. In the Brahmakṣhetra,[4] the Pushkara tîrtha, this (truth) about Râdhâ was told by Hari to Brahmâ, and subsequently I heard it from Brahmâ. Sâdhus (who are themselves pure and purify others) constantly worship the lotus-feet of Râdhâ, who purifies the three worlds. Bhagavân Ṣhrîkṛishṇa Himself ever offers arghya[5] with devotion at those worshipful lotus-feet. Besides this, (during the play he enjoyed) in the woods and groves of Vṛindâvana, Bhagavân (possessed of a form sweet with love) painted with devotion (by soft touches of his own finger) the tips of the toes of the lotus-feet of Her (who was all full of love and Brahman incarnate) with the cool and brilliant paint of alakta."[6]

In the Râdhâ Tantra it has been said: "In the great mantra consisting of Râdhikâ's thousand names, Ṣhrîkṛishṇa is the Ṛishi, the great Devî who crushed Mahisha, is the presiding Devatâ and Gâyatrî is the metre. The

[1] Vâmâchâra is one of the Tântrik Âchâras (see Introduction).

[2] Svadharma.

[3] Adharma.

[4] At Pushkara, in Ajmere, where there is a temple to Brahmâ.

[5] An offering of grains of paddy and blades of durvâ grass to a person honoured and respected, or to an image.

[6] Red lac paint, with which the soles of the feet of Hindu women are painted.

application of this mantra is for siddhi in Mahâvidyâ."[1]

The Rishi of a mantra is he who was the first to be initiated and attain siddhi in it.[2] There is nothing to say to those who are worshippers of the yugala form[3] and with a knowledge of monistic truth do not discriminate between Râdhâ and Kṛishṇa. But even from the dualistic standpoint sâdhakas should now understand how Râdhikâ stands in relation to Ṣhrîkṛishṇa.[4]

Again, in the Nârada Pancharâtra[5] it has been said: "Of the great mantra consisting of one thousand names of Râdhikâ, by whose grace Ṣhrîkṛishṇa is the Sovereign Master[6] of the region of Goloka, and has attained the position of supreme Lord of that great mantra, Nârada is the Ṛishi, and (owing to its being a different mantra)[7] Râdhikâ, who is supreme over the supreme, is the Devatâ. Its application is for the fulfilment of the fourfold aim."[8]

Râdhikâ is the handmaid, initiation in whose mantra, and education and accomplishment in whose Tantra, made Bhagavân to become Bhagavân. To worship Her, even the Lord of the universe descended on earth from Goloka and became Her servant. In the hope of kissing Her graceful feet the head of Chintâmaṇi[9] —the thought of whose feet gratifies the world of moving and unmoving things, who is the crest-gem of the four-headed Deva[10]—touched the dust. If, then, you call Her who is such an one Ṣhrîkṛishṇa's handmaid, then whom would you call Ṣhrîkṛishṇa's Îṣhvarî ?[11] I would not, of

[1] The successful attainment of knowledge of Devî Mahâvidyâ.

[2] And who reveals it.

[3] The form in which Râdhâ and Kṛishṇa are combined.

[4] That is, even if they make a distinction between Râdhâ and Kṛishṇa, sâdhakas should understand from the above the relation of the one to the other.

[5] Chap. v., 5th Râtra.

[6] Adhîṣhvara.

[7] From the preceding.

[8] Dharma, artha, kâma, moksha (see Introduction).

[9] One of the names of Kṛishṇa.

[10] Brahmâ.

[11] Feminine of Îṣhvara, or Lord.

my own accord, say all this. I am obliged to do so in reply to your words. It is for this reason that there is so much discussion about honour and dishonour. My Kṛishṇa has neither a handmaid nor an Îṣhvarî ; but when your Kṛishṇa has necessity for a handmaid, why should he not have necessity for an Îṣhvarî as well ? The moment you step within the bounds of dualistic knowledge He, in spite of his being Îṣhvara, will have, by your grace, to suffer inevitably as well the state of a servant as that of a master. Or, if in your language, the person served is called handmaid and the person serving is called master, then we have nothing to object to this servitude and lordship. However that may be, O you whose knowledge is of a dualistic kind, take note that it is the nineteenth century of the Kaḷi yuga, and apparently the custom of the age is to call mothers and aunts handmaids !

However that be, it requires now to be seen what we gain or lose, whether or not there exists a relation of master and servant between Bhagavân and Bhagavatî. If it exists, a worshipper has no right to discuss it, nor is there the necessity to do so. If Râdhikâ is to be worshipped merely on the ground of Her being Bhagavân's handmaid, and if, in that worship, Her satisfaction is to be sought, then surely it is necessary to ascertain and arrive at a final conclusion as to whether She is really Ṣhrîkṛishna's handmaid or not. But, then, who will judge the matter ? If you say that we shall be the judges, and Râdhâ and Kṛishṇa themselves will supply the evidence, then, too, it will be extremely difficult to arrive at a definite conclusion. For in the play of love which they enjoyed during their stay at Vraja, when Râdhikâ said to Ṣhrîkṛishṇa, " You are my all," Ṣhrîkṛishṇa said to Râdhikâ, " I am unable to call You ' You.' To call You ' my own ' is not much."[1] Putting aside

[1] The meaning of this is : " You and I are the same," so that the relationship of the speakers is not fully expressed by the expression " You are my all."

even what Ṣhrîkṛishṇa said, which is more[1] than what Râdhikâ said, if the two are considered to be of equal positions, then, also, one of them cannot be a servant or handmaid of the other. Now, how can the matter be judged on the evidence of such witnesses? If, therefore, you want to judge the matter by a consideration of acts instead of words, then it is not for you and me to judge and arrive at a final conclusion on the matter. In this effort to appease the anger[2] of Râdhikâ, Bhagavân Himself finally decided the question at the feet of Râdhikâ.

But if you say that you will call Râdhikâ Ṣhrîkṛishṇa's handmaid, and worship Her with food first offered to Ṣhrîkṛishṇa in reliance only on the sentiment expressed by the words, " You are my all," spoken by Râdhikâ to Ṣhrîkṛishṇa in a temporary moment of service—a ripple, as it were, in the midst of waves of play in the sea of love —then even Râdhikâ cannot be called inferior to Kṛishṇa. If you can worship Râdhikâ with food first offered to Ṣhrîkṛishṇa, then I, too, can, in reliance upon the incident in which he appeases Râdhikâ's anger, represent him as hankering after the leavings of Râdhikâ's food and driven off with weeping. The service I speak of is as much one of sentiment as the one you speak of. As your words are sweet, but your acts are deceitful, so I am obliged to make my acts and words similar. In this state of things it is impossible for us even to come together, much less to arrive at any decision.

In sorrow have poets said: " If two persons be both candid, then the love that grows between them remains for ever candid and unshaken. If one of them be candid and another crooked, then love between them endures for a few days only—that is to say, so long as the crookedness of the crooked person does not show itself. And if both of them be crooked, there can be no love between them, much less a permanent love." O you who speak

[1] For Kṛishṇa did not discriminate between Him and Her.

[2] Mâna—of wife with husband in love matters.

of distinctions, this crookedness of yours and mine precludes the possibility that love may grow between us. Think but once that They who are referred to in this discussion on the subject of love are both very crooked,[1] with three bends in their bodies,[2] and yet unite to form one person.[3] The devotee has therefore said: "The moon will perish, the sun will perish, this Brahmâṇḍa formed by the spread of the three guṇas will perish, in the great dissolution, but it is the firm conviction of the Harivangṣha[4] community that the constant play of Râdhâ and Kṛishṇa at Vṛindâvana will never come to an end."

So I say, O Sâdhaka, see the threefold play of creation, preservation, and destruction in the thrice-bent and fair bodies of the Father and the Mother of the universe, and forget all distinctions. Call, for once, the Father Mother and the Mother Father, and making the Father and the Mother one, take them to the Sahasrâra.[5] There, in the heart of that full-bloomed and thousand-petalled lotus, shining with the refulgence of the sun and moon, in that seat of the undifferentiated[6] kaivalya-play[7] of Him who is full of light and Her who is full of light, stand with folded hands, and with a disconsolate heart weep, and say: "I know not who you are? Be you Father or Mother or another, tell me whose I am?" Brother Sâdhaka, be you a worshipper of the Father or a worshipper of the Mother, you cannot have a better oppor-

[1] Kutila.

[2] Tṛibhanga; a favourite representation of the body with Indian artists is that with three curves, formed by the inclined neck, trunk, and legs.

[3] Bhagavân and Bhâgavatî are here called kutila and tṛibhanga because of the inscrutability of Their ways.

[4] Vaishṇava. Harivangṣha, or "family of Hari," is the name of a Paurâṇik work which gives the history of the family of Hari or Kṛishṇa.

[5] The thousand-petalled lotus in the head, above the six chakras (see Introduction).

[6] Abhinna.

[7] Kaivalya is moksha.

tunity for putting both the Father and the Mother to shame[1] than at that time when they become one.

When the Father and the Mother will lower their faces in shame at making themselves known as Father or Mother, know, O Sâdhaka, that on that day you will be victorious in this discussion. Whoever has once seen the play of the soft and sweet smile of shame in their silent faces, lowered in shame at the question of the son, for him all doubt as to who is the Father and who is the Mother, or who is great and who is small, has been for ever dispelled. O ye who are intimately associated with the principles of Tantra! O Sâdhakas, who form the most beloved wealth[2] of the Mother! if for any of you such a day has ever come or may come in future, then on this or that day kindly remember for once, at least, this poor and destitute son of the Mother who is full of mercy for the poor.

What can I do, O brother? The truth which has to be attained by sâdhana cannot be explained in words. Once call out to Her who is truth[3] itself, and of whom we now speak, and opening the portals of your heart, say: "O Mother, be Thou Râdhâ adored by Ṣhrîkṛishṇa, or Râdhikâ adoring Him, Thou knoweth Thy own play. O playful Mother,[4] appear once in Thine own real form in the solitary grove of this heart, and in the company of Thy companions stand with three-fold bend, yet making your body one with the body of Ṣhyâma.[5] O charmer of the mind of the charmer of love,[6] illumine but once the forest of my heart with the refulgence of Thy world-enchanting beauty, so that I may see Thee with Thine own light, just as one worships the Ganges with Ganges' water.

[1] The shame (lajjâ) is caused by their having manifested themselves in the distinctive aspects of Father and Mother.

[2] Literally, "wealth bound in the skirt of the dress of the Mother."

[3] Tattvamayî. [4] Lîlâmayî.

[5] Ṣhyâma is a name of Kṛishṇa, meaning of dark colour.

[6] Madana.

O beloved of Ṣhyâma, stand forth once with a dark body, so that, O Gaurî! all idea of difference between a fair and a dark body may be dispelled from my mind.[1] O Mother, Thou Thyself dost rouse and allay Thine own anger,[2] Thou Thyself dost clasp Thine own feet as Râi (Râdhikâ), Thou Thyself dost inflame Thine own anger, and as Ṣhyâma Thou Thyself dost appease it. Thou art all full of play,[3] and art Brahman,[4] and so this anger becomes Thee. But, O Mother, we are erring Jîvas, blinded by an intense intoxication.[5] We can be angry, but cannot appease it. Being Jivas full of mâyâ,[6] we cannot, therefore, understand the meaning of the (appeasing) of the anger of Her who is Brahman.

O Mother, for him who has understood its meaning, both honour[7] and dishonour[8] have for ever disappeared. O Dispeller of the fear of existence, Gladdener of the hearts of devotees, eternally pure Devî; O Mother, Thou art Ṣhakti incarnate and grantor of ṣhakti and liberation. Of Thy mercy grant unto us the ṣhakti to understand the truth concerning Thyself, so that we may leave this sangsâra never to return thereto, after having offered all honour and dishonour at those lotus-feet, so desired of devotees.

O you who speak of distinctions, do not widen the path whereby you go to your downfall by imagining distinctions between Ṣhakti and the possessor of ṣhakti. If you offer to Râdhikâ food first offered to Ṣhrîkṛishṇa, She will not be insulted thereby; for in Her eyes the person[9] of Kṛishṇa is but a manifestation of Herself in play. But, for yourself, should this insulting idea arise in

[1] The beloved of Ṣhyâma is Râdhâ, who is fair-coloured. The word "Gaurî" means "one who is fair." It is also the name of the wife of Ṣhiva, who is in reality the same as Râdhâ. The author here prays Râdhâ to assume a dark body—that is to say, a body of the colour of Kṛishṇa—so that his mind may be disabused of all ideas of difference between Râdhâ and Kṛishṇa.

[2] Mâna (*vide ante*, p. 346). [3] Lîlâmayî. [4] Brahmamayî. [5] Mada.
[6] Mâyâmaya. [7] Mâna. [8] Apamâna. [9] Mûrti.

your mind, there is no escape from hell. Even He in the pride of whose glory you entertain these insulting notions concerning Râdhikâ—even He has, in intense devotion to Her who is ever kind to devotees, said, in the Nirvâṇa Tantra :

"Those who make japa of the names of Râdhâ and Kṛishṇa, placing the name of Kṛishṇa after that of Râdhâ, to him do I undoubtedly grant the lot that is mine. Those who, instructed by gurus in the path of bhâva[1] or of mantra, worship me in this manner—that is to say, those who, knowing Râdhâ and Kṛishṇa to be inseparable in reality and yet, in order to proclaim the triumph of the love of Her who is all full of love,[2] make japa of the great mantra of the two names, placing the name of Kṛishṇa after that of Râdhâ—they are ever as powerful as Myself.

"That woman who worships me, a male, in the faith that I am inseparable from Thee, also of a truth acquires power equal to Thine own. Hear, O Râdhikâ ! To those who (firmly believing that you and I are inseparable) worship the yugala aspect[3] with or without pious devotion, to them I grant the state which is mine, owing to Thy love for me." That is to say, such is the unthinkable power of the yugala aspect, that, whether one has full devotion or not, it pours an abundant shower of love on one's heart, were it even the adamantine heart of a great sinner,[4] and makes the tree of Parabrahmatattva,[5] which is love for Râdhâ and Kṛishṇa, blossom, flower, and bear fruit thereon.

"O you discriminating Vaishṇava ! How dare you extend your authority over Vishṇu, after whose name you are called a Vaishṇava, and who is your authority in everything ? Being the servant of Vishṇu's servant's servant,

[1] Sentiment, emotion, love, devotion. [2] Premamayî.

[3] In which both Kṛishṇa and Râdhâ are combined.

[4] Literally, "heretic" (pâshaṇḍa).

[5] The tree which symbolizes the Parabrahman.

what makes you so proud that you insult the Devatâ whom Vishṇu adores? You would not admit the superiority of any over the Devatâ you worship. Very well. But ought you, on that account, to divide one thing into two parts, and attribute lordship to one and servitude to another? Why should you call Râdhâ Kṛishṇa's handmaid instead of Kṛishṇa's own self?[1] And even should you do so in the spirit of play, why do you not also call Kṛishṇa Râdhâ's servant, just as you call Râdhâ Kṛishṇa's handmaid? Or do you think that Kṛishṇa's lordship cannot be maintained without calling Râdhâ His handmaid? Is this your idea of Kṛishṇa's Brahmahood? He who is the Lord will always be so, whether Râdhâ becomes His handmaid or not. O brother, you proceed to establish Kṛishṇa's lordship on Râdhâ's servitude; you proceed to worship the adored Devatâ of Kṛishṇa with food first offered to Him. But you do not even once desire to understand why you are in such a miserable plight in spite of your worship of Kṛishṇa? Why are you not saved in spite of the presence of the Lord, the Saviour of the three worlds? To strike with a weapon the left limb of Him whose right limb you worship! Ah, we know not whether, in consequence of such worship, Bhagavân will gratify you by appearing before you, or greet you with His sudarṣhana.[2] Friend of the poor! Merciful Deva! Thou alone art the Saviour of the three worlds, Thou art ever the reliever of burdens of the earth.

"Lord, save the community of Sâdhakas from these false beliefs. Or, O Lord, it is miserliness shown by yourself of your own accord. It is because Thou, O Kṛishṇa, art unwilling to make the being[3] of Râdhâ in which Thou hast sunk and lost Thyself the property of all, that Thou, O crest-gem of schemers,[4] hast turned the wheel of the intelligence of Jîvas. So I say, O discriminating Vaish-

[1] Svarûpa.
[2] The discus of Vishnu.
[3] Tattva.
[4] Chakrî.

ṇava, if your understanding of the subject is of a dualistic character, then understand this also, that it is doubtful whether even after a hundred crores[1] of births, you will be able to worship Her whose worshipper Kṛishṇa Himself is."

Amongst those who, by throwing all these thorns upon the spiritual path, consider themselves to be learned,[2] there are some who are even heard to say that ṣhakti can exist only by the support[3] of the possessor of ṣhakti, and therefore ask what is the necessity of worshipping the thing supported instead of the supporter ?

Sâdhakas have already been given ample evidence to show the nature of this relation of the supporter and the supported, between the possessor of ṣhakti and Ṣhakti. What new answer can we now give to the above question ? If, however, the matter must be judged from the point of view of the supporter and the supported, then, leaving aside considerations of ṣhakti-tattva, we see that Brahmâ is supported by a swan,[4] Vishṇu is supported by Garuḍa, Mahâdeva is supported by a bull, and the Devî is supported by a lion. Should we, then, for this reason ignore Brahmâ, Vishṇu, Maheṣhvara, and Maheṣhvarî, and worship the swan, Garuḍa, the bull, and the lion, in the belief that as supporters they are the more important of the two ? The relation between the possessor of ṣhakti and Ṣhakti is the same as that which exists between the carrier[5] and the person carried. This is the only fit reply to a fit question.

In reality, there are no such two things as Ṣhakti and possessor of ṣhakti. There is no evidence of, nor is there any necessity for, the existence of the two things. Male, female, and neuter, all are Ṣhakti. Body, senses, mind, and Âtmâ, all are manifestations[6] of ṣhakti. Chitṣhakti[7] as Âtmâ is, like the solar orb, the condensed and massive form of ṣhakti; while body, senses, mind,

[1] 1,000,000,000. [2] Paṇdit. [3] Âṣhraya.
[4] Hangsa, or some say goose, duck, or flamingo [5] Vâhana
[6] Vibhûti. [7] See p. 314, note 2.

and other things are, like sun's rays spreading on all sides, but fluid parts of that great massive ṣhakti. Although the sun is in reality energy[1] in substance, yet for common understanding such expressions as "the sun is possessed of energy" and "the sun's energy" are used. Similarly, although Âtmâ is Ṣhakti itself in substance, yet in order that Jîva may the better understand, Ṣhâstra has used such expressions as "Âtmâ is possessed of ṣhakti" and "Âtmâ's ṣhakti." This is the only difference between Ṣhakti and the possessor of ṣhakti. In a spiritual sense, nothing exists as possessor of ṣhakti besides Ṣhakti.

Even the Purusha-form,[2] which you and I, according to our language and understanding, know as the possessor of ṣhakti, is but another or changed[3] form of Prakṛiti. Other evidence is unnecessary. Parameṣhvara Himself, the sole and best Purusha in the world,[4] who presides or dwells in all Puruṣhas, has said in the Nirvâna Tantra:

"Just as trees grow on the earth and again disappear in it; just as bubbles are formed in water and again disappear in water; just as lightning is formed in clouds and again disappears in them; so at the time of creation Brahmâ, Vishṇu, Maheṣhvara, and other Devas are born of the body of that beginningless and eternal Kâlikâ, and at the time of dissolution they again disappear in Her. O Devî, for this reason, so long as Jîva does not know the supreme truth[5] in regard to Her who plays with Mahâkâla,[6] his desire for liberation can only give rise to ridicule. From a part only of Kâlikâ, the primordial Ṣhakti, arises Brahmâ, from a part only arises Janârdana, and from a part only arises Ṣhambhu. O fair-eyed Devî, just as rivers and lakes are unable to traverse a vast sea—that is to say, however strong their currents may be, they all lose their individual existence entering into the vast womb of the sea—so Brahmâ and other Devas lose

[1] Tejas. [2] Mûrti. [3] Vikṛiti.
[4] Jagadekapurushottama. [5] Tattva. [6] Mahâkâlavilâsinî.

their separate existence on entering into the untraversable and infinite being[1] of Mahâkâlî. Compared with the vast sea of the being[1] of Kâlî, the existence of Brahmâ and other Devas is nothing but such little water as is contained in the hollow made by a cow's hoof. Just as it is impossible for a hollow made by a cow's hoof to form a notion of the unfathomable depth of a sea, so it is impossible for Brahmâ and other Devas to have a knowledge of the nature[1] of Kâlî. (For Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara are the presiding Devas of the three periods of creation, preservation, and dissolution; but who can master with his intellect the nature[1] of that Kâlî with whose playful glance even Mahâkâla, to whom the three periods of time are but three twinkles of His three eyes, appears at one moment and disappears at another?) Neither Brahmâ, nor Vishṇu, nor Maheṣhvara knows Her fully."

"They, too, are born at the beginning of creation as Lords of creation, preservation, and destruction, and again disappear in Her at the time of dissolution. For this reason Her Purusha appearances[2] can lead only to svarga and other regions.[3] There is none other but Herself who can grant nirvâṇa liberation. The south is the region where Yama, who awards punishment to sinners, presides. Even if a great sinner, trembling with fear of death, utters but once the name of Kâlî while passing towards that south, the holder of the rod of punishment[4] becomes frightened by the (tremendous force of the Brahmâṇḍa piercing) name of Brahman,[5] and flees to all the quarters (forsaking his own place of rule, the southern region). The inhabitants of the three worlds, therefore, sing Her name as 'Dakshiṇâ[6] Kâlî' (the Dispeller of the fear of the south). Or She is called Dakshiṇâ[7] Kâlî, because She is dakshiṇâ or skilful in

[1] Tattva.
[2] Mûrti.
[3] Loka. Only the Brahmamayî can give liberation (mukti).
[4] Yama-daṇḍadhara.
[5] Kâlî.
[6] Southern. The south is the region of death.
[7] Skilful.

creating and destroying even Mahâkâla, the Purusha, who is above guṇas."

Vikṛiti alone appears and disappears, while Prakṛiti[1] is eternally unchanging. Bhagavân, therefore, has again said: "It is only when Prakṛiti attains the state of Vikṛiti that She sees the three worlds (fashioned by Herself); and again when Vikṛiti attains the state of Prakṛiti, She does not see anything (for, She then exists in the form of Kaivalya"[2])—that is to say, when Vikṛiti in the form of the dualistic Brahmâṇḍa disappears in the womb of Prakṛiti, that monistic Prakṛiti alone exists in whose womb the Brahmâṇḍa is contained, and, consequently, nothing remains to be seen but Herself. In another place the Ṣhâstra has clearly said: "Purusha is but a Vikṛiti[3] of Prakṛiti."

In the Shâktamalâ Chandrikâ it is said: "Brahmâ is Ṣhakti, Ṣhiva is Ṣhakti, Vishṇu also is Ṣhakti, and Vâsava[4] is Ṣhakti. Ṣhakti is at the root of all the many other Devas. Without Ṣhakti none is able to preserve his individual existence. O Thou who possesseth a high mind, know, therefore, that Ṣhakti is the greatest of all."

In the Brahmâṇḍa Tantra it is said: "Amongst Vaishṇavas some meditate upon that great Ṣhakti as Kṛishṇa, two-armed and beautiful with a dark[5] complexion, and others as the husband of Lakshmî, four-armed and tranquil. She whom some Shaivas see as five-headed, naked as space, and holding the trident; and others as four-headed, one-headed, and so on, according to different forms of meditation—that great Devî Prakṛiti inhabits the region[6] of Brahma-tejas.[7] Great yogîs, by single-minded practice of the yoga of devotion,[8] see that Prakṛiti alone behind all things. Just as one single sun

[1] The true nature, as compared with its changing transformations or "corruptions" (vikṛiti).

[2] The state of liberation from all phenomenal existence.

[3] Evolved from (*vide ante*).

[4] Indra. [5] Ṣhyâma. [6] Maṇḍala.

[7] The glorious luminous energy, which is Brahman. [8] Bhakti.

is reflected in thousands and thousands of forms in mirrors, so one single Prakṛiti is reflected in infinite forms in Her own mâyâ. Just as in spite of the existence of different upâdhis,[1] by which space[2] is known according as it is space in a pot,[3] space in a room,[4] space reflected in water,[5] extensive space,[6] and so on, there is in reality no difference in space; so in spite of the existence of infinite different forms,[7] there is in reality no difference in Her who is infinity itself. That one sole Mahâvidyâ fills the universe.[8] The names only are different."

The Kûrma Purâṇa says: "The truth, which is the conclusion of all Brahmavâdins[9] in the Vedas and Vedântas, is that which yogîs see as one all-pervading, subtle, attributeless, motionless, and fixed. That is the supreme state of Mahâdevî. What yogîs see as endless, unwasting, sole, pure Parabrahman, that is the supreme state of Mahâdevî. That eternal existence,[10] higher than the highest, universal, beneficent and faultless, which is in the womb of Prakṛiti, that is the highest state of Mahâdevî. That which is white, spotless, pure, attributeless and non-dualistic, that which is only a matter for realization by the Âtmâ, that is the highest state of Mahâdevî."

The Devî's words in the same Purâṇa are: "The supreme aspect of Mine the substance of which is consciousness,[11] sole,[12] and pure; the immortal state which is free from all upâdhis,[13] and eternal, that is only attainable by knowledge alone. Those who see the Âtmâ as knowledge,[14] undoubtedly enter into Me."

In the Devî Âgama it is said: "That Mahâmâyâ, who in reality is consciousness and Parabrahman, has assumed various forms out of favour to devotees."

The Yoginî Tantra says: "He who exists pervading

1 Apparently limiting conditions.
2 Âkâṣha.
3 Ghaṭâkaṣha.
4 Gṛihâkâṣha.
5 Jalâkâṣha.
6 Mahâkâṣha.
7 Rûpa.
8 Viṣhvamâyî.
9 Those who speak of and worship the Brahman.
10 Tattva.
11 Chinmaya.
12 Kevala.
13 Apparent limitations, *vide ante.*
14 Jnâna.

the vishva (universe) as Deva Vishveshvara is Himself Vishveshvarî, the universe-pervading Devî."

"Whatever shakti anything possesses, that is Devî Vishveshvarî, and all those things are Deva Vishveshvara. She into the hollows of whose every hair millions of Brahmândas constantly disappear ; She it is who grants the desires of Sâdhakas by the assumption of various forms in play (for such is Her kindness)."

In the Navaratneshvara it is said : "That Devî who is absolute existence, absolute consciousness, and absolute bliss, should be thought of as a female, or as a male, or as pure Brahman. In reality, however, She is neither male nor female, nor neuter—(that is to say, she is not bound to any particular form).

"Still, just as a kalpalatâ[1] is called by a feminine name, so She, too, is called by a feminine name (Shakti—that is to say, one obtains from a kalpalatâ anything which he desires, be it the fruit of a creeper (latâ) or that of a tree, and this reveals a divine[2] shakti beyond that of a latâ (creeper) or of a tree). Still, just as a kalpalatâ is a latâ (creeper) in form, so She assumes a female form,[3] in spite of Her being all forms and above all forms." Just as the form of a latâ (creeper) is the real form of a kalpalatâ, in spite of its bearing fruits of trees, so the form of Shakti is Her real form in spite of all male appearances,[4] such as Devas, Dânavas, and so on, which are Her forms[5] only. Whether in dualistic or in non-dualistic play, in the form of Brahman or in the form of Jîva, the female is shakti, and the male is shâkta. Shakti is the person worshipped, and Purusha is the person worshipping. This is the last step of sâdhana, the highest state of spiritual realization.[6]

Although male and female are both Her aspects, yet Her shakti is naturally revealed more in the female than in the male form, and this is the cause of the distinction

[1] Desire-fulfilling creeper. [2] Daiva. [3] Strîrûpadhârinî.
[4] Mûrti. [5] Rûpa. [6] Prâpti.

of worshipper and the worshipped,[1] and it is on account of this greater manifestation that females are called "ṣhakti." From this one must not suppose that ṣhakti is less present in such appearances[2] as Ṣhiva, Kṛishṇa, Râma, Sûrya, Vishṇu, Gaṇeṣha, and so on. For although these appearances are actually male, they are not bound to the male form. They are merely formed in the play of Her who is consciousness in manifesting consciousness. If a Sâdhaka who is a worshipper of the form Kṛishṇa desires to see Him as Kâlî, then Bhagavân, the fulfiller of the desires of devotees, is bound to appear before him in that form.

Râdhikâ Herself has, by pretending[3] to be afraid of Âyâna,[4] given evidence of this perfect Ṣhakti of Bhagavân.[5] It is with reference to this force of perfect Ṣhakti in the female form that Maheṣhvarî Herself has said, in the Durgâgîtâ of the Muṇḍamâlâ Tantra:

"It is I who am Râdhikâ in Goloka, Kamalâ in Vaikuṇṭha, and Sâvitrî and Sarasvatî, the presiding Devî of speech in Brahmaloka. It is I who am Pârvatî in Kailâṣha, Jânakî in Mithilâ, Rukmiṇî in Dvâraka, and Draupadî[6] in Hastinâpura. I am Sandhyâ[7] and Gâyatrî, the Mother of Vedas, the objects of adoration to all the twice-born people. Among Yogas[8] I am Pushâ, among flowers I am black Aparâjitâ,[9] among leaves I am the bael-leaf,[10] among pîṭhas I am the Yonipîṭha,[11] I am Mahâvidyâ formed of Hari and Hara,[12] and I am also the worshipped of Brahmâ, Vishṇu and Ṣhiva. O Lord,

[1] The female principle is called ṣhakti because there is more ṣhakti revealed in it than in the male principle. As the Muṇḍamâlâ Tantra says, "Wherever there is a female (ṣhakti), there I am." For the same reason the female is worshipped by the male.

[2] Mûrti.

[3] Abhinaya.

[4] Râdhikâ's husband.

[5] This point here is not at all clear. For the story is that Kṛishṇa took the form of Kâlî for fear of Âyâna.

[6] As to these names, *vide ante*.

[7] Morning, noon, and evening prayers personified (see Introduction).

[8] See p. 116, *ante*.

[9] The flower clitoria.

[10] Sacred to Ṣhiva.

[11] Kamrûp, in Assam (see Introduction).

[12] Vishṇu and Ṣhiva.

O Ṣhangkara,[1] it is only by my special favour that Jîvas can know me (what more need I say, O my husband !) ; wherever there is Ṣhakti (a female) there I am. O Mahâdeva, know for certain that this is the manner in which I am best contemplated. Whoever forsakes this path of Ṣhakti and proceeds along another path in search of Me throws away the jewel which is in the palm of his hand, and runs after a heap of ashes."

This is the command of Ṣhâstra. If, after this, any of you wish to solve the matter by a thorough understanding in the light of science or philosophy, in that case also it must be admitted that there is no other Ṣhakti or possessor of Ṣhakti other than the Ṣhakti of Âtmâ, by which body, senses, mind, and life[2] are guided. If everything is performed by Ṣhakti, then why wait for a possessor of Ṣhakti ? If you ask by whose support[3] this Ṣhakti exists, then do you yourself tell me by whose support the possessor of Ṣhakti exists. If the Brahmaṣhakti who supports the Brahmâṇḍa has to wait for another's support, then this Brahmâṇḍa must go to perdition.[4] Who is the container[5] of the contained Ṣhakti ? By whose energy[6] does fire burn ? By whose speed does wind blow ? Such questions do not bespeak a natural state of the mind. However that may be, it is because Purusha is enabled by the support of Ṣhakti to display Himself[7] that Ṣhâstra has designated him as Ṣhaktimân (the possessor of Ṣhakti). The Brahmâṇḍa play of Brahmamayî manifests the same principles. For this reason, in the creation, preservation, and destruction of the dualistic material world,[8] the Purusha aspects of Ṣhakti are Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara, and Her prakṛiti aspects are Brâhmaṇî, Vaishṇavî, and Maheṣhvarî. In the Gâyatrî mantra also it is these two Purusha and Prakṛiti aspects which have to be worshipped at the commencement in prâṇâ-

[1] Ṣhiva. [2] Prâṇa. [3] Âshraya. [4] Rasâtala. [5] Âdhâra. [6] Tejas.
[7] *Lit.:* to spread his own vibhûtis (see p. 242, note 2). [8] Prapancha.

yâma.[1] Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara are the Purushas, and at the end, in the Gâyatrî dhyâna,[2] Brahmâṇî, Vaishnavî, and Maheṣhvarî are the Prakṛitis. The Gâyatrî is merely Sûtra (aphorism), and the Sandhyâ-prayers are its vṛitti (exposition) or Bhâshya (commentary). In the Gâyatrî mantra five forms of Brahman's self[3] have been specified—namely, pervader of the universe,[4] creator of the world,[5] object of worship,[6] playful Deva,[7] and instigator of Jîva's intelligence.[8] Of these five, the epithet "pervader of the universe" denotes the Self-aspect,[9] and comes first. Next follows the introduction of the dualistic world. The world cannot be created in the attributeless state, and without fully bringing into play the three guṇas. By whom will He be worshipped if no worshipper exist? Play[10] is impossible if no desire exists. Lastly, why should He direct Jîva's intelligence if He has not taken upon Himself the lordship of the Brahmâṇḍa? Intelligent Brâhmaṇas will now understand from the Gâyatrî mantra itself whether the Devatâ, who forms its subject,[11] is attributeless Brahman or with attribute. Brahman, whom the Gâyatrî seeks to establish, is neither attributeless nor with attribute—that is to say, It is both attributeless and with attribute. A Sâdhaka, when he has attained siddhi in the sâdhana of Brahman, with attribute will, in natural course, lose himself in the attributeless Self.[12] He need not before this time shut his eyes and see darkness for three ages.[13] By Brahman with attribute you and I may understand a small Brahman.

[1] Breath-control (see Introduction).

[2] The formula of meditation on the Gâyatrî.

[3] Svarûpa.

[4] *I.e.*, Ong Bhûrbhuvah svah.

[5] Tatsavituh.

[6] Vareṇyam Bhargah.

[7] Devasya dhîmahi. The Deva is described in the text as playful (lîlâmaya), for lîlâ is a characteristic of Devas.

[8] Dhiyo yo nah prachodayât (see Introduction). The Sanskrit in notes 4 to 8 are the portions of the Gâyatrî referred to, though not expressed, in the text.

[9] Svarûpa.

[10] Lîlâ.

[11] Pratipâdya.

[12] Svarûpa.

[13] That is, he has not got to wait, but the result follows immediately.

But in the eyes of the Ṣhâstra, Brahman is neither small nor great, as you think.

As an aquatic animal must pass through the rivers if it wishes to journey to the sea, so a Jîva must pass through the dualistic world if he wishes to make his way to the Brahman. Ṣhâstra has, therefore, said that to reach mahânirvâṇa, which is His attributeless aspect, one must proceed by the aid of the support of His forms[1] with attributes. By the term "attributeless" one is not to understand that Brahman has no attribute,[2] but that, although with attributes,[3] He is not attached[4] to them. The Sea is not waterless. But as, notwithstanding its fulness of water, it is the Lord or presiding Devatâ over waters, so Brahman, with attribute or attributeless, is, notwithstanding such attributes, Lord or presiding Devatâ over attributes. Every attribute bears eternal evidence of the infinite number of attributes of Her in Whom are all attributes.[5]

To say, therefore, that She is attributeless is only to shows one's ignorance. The manifestations of Ṣhakti in the forms[6] of Devas, Dânavas, and men, signify nothing but the spread[7] of attributes belonging to Her who holds the three guṇas. Attachment, inclination, permanence, peace, self-control, patience, error, enjoyment, liberation, devotion, and the like are all nothing but Ṣhakti. Thanks, then, to the tongue of him who says that She is unconscious, She in whose substance hearing, thinking, going, seeing, and other acts of consciousness exist. Whether a person who asks if he has got a tongue has really got it or not, will be understood by others if not by himself. But he, too, ought to understand this much, that if he has not got a tongue, with whose help, then, does he ask: "Have I got a tongue?"

Similarly, an advocate of the theory that Ṣhakti is unconscious,[8] ought at least to ask himself under whose

[1] Mûrti. [2] Guna. [3] Guṇamaya. [4] Lipta.
[5] Guṇamayî. [6] Mûrti. [7] Vistâra. [8] Jaḍa.

influence earthly Jîvas become conscious? If Ṣhakti be not really consciousness, by whose grace do I possess the power of asking whether Ṣhakti is conscious or unconscious? I know not what severe punishment for terrible crimes committed in previous births it is which smites a man so senseless as to cause him to make so delirious a statement as that "Ṣhakti is unconscious." He is saying that of a Ṣhakti the beams of the moon of whose consciousness are powerfully manifested in every vein, every artery, and in every atom of a Jîva's body. Ṣhâstra has said: "O Devî, without a knowledge of Ṣhakti nirvâṇa cannot be attained." Do you think, O Jîva! that you will gain the knowledge of Ṣhakti-tattva which leads directly to nirvâna liberation, merely by virtue of your being a great polemist, and without the possession of a wealth of sâdhana stored by in many previous births?

Are you to possess the wealth which is worshipped by Brahmâ and other Devas—the treasure which lies eternally hidden in the storehouse of Sadânanda's heart? Hari, Hari, Hari! You and I want to obtain Her by the force of intelligence, but we fail to realize that we have not the power to understand anything beyond what She, who is the intelligence of even intelligence, has, with proper judgment, given us the competence to understand. Not to speak of anyone else, even Ṣhangkarâchâryya himself, O Sâdhaka, played at this sport.

When Bhagavân Ṣhangkarâchâryya, upholder of the mâyâ doctrine, preacher of the Vedânta philosophy, and crest-gem of philosophers, arrived at Kâṣhî after having proved himself a conqueror in every quarter; when followers of other systems of philosophy, wounded all over by the powerful arrows of his arguments, had been dispersed and scattered, he, by some play of the Mother of the world which we know not of, commenced, to the immense joy of the Ṣhaiva community, to hurl relentless thunderbolts on the heart of the Ṣhâkta com-

munity. For he proceeded to establish that "nothing exists as Ṣhakti" besides Ṣhiva. Ṣhâktas thus sorely oppressed by him, though defeated outwardly by arguments, were undefeated in inner reasoning. They were, however, intensely grieved to see such scepticism[1] proclaimed against the Devatâ whom they worshipped. Who but She who dwells in all hearts can realize the intensity of such grief in the hearts of Sâdhakas? Ṣhangkarâchâryya, however, could not understand this even then; for his ideas did not go beyond the notion that "Kâṣhî[2] belonged to Ṣhiva." It was even then unknown to him that there was also a Mistress[3] of Kâṣhî. The throne of Her who is Ṣhakti in reality, was therefore moved to appease the pangs of the hearts of Sâdhakas, and to lift the curtain of error which had fallen upon Ṣhangkarâchâryya, the incarnation of all devotion.[4]

One day, therefore, Ṣhangkarâchâryya, after an untiring discussion lasting till midday, lay with a wearied body on the Maṇikarṇikâ ghât, enjoying in his mind his triumph in having disproved the Ṣhakti doctrine.[5] He then saw a girl of serene appearance slowly approaching the ghât,[6] carrying a small pitcher on her lap. Ṣhangkarâchâryya was lying with his head towards the south and feet towards the north, in such a way as to completely block the path. On coming near him, the girl very meekly said: "Bhagavân, please raise your feet so that I may fill my pitcher with water and go away." Ṣhangkarâchâryya said: "Mother, you may step over me. There will be no blame in your doing so." The girl replied: "How can that be? You are a Brâhmaṇa. How can I step over you?" Ṣhangkarâchâryya, proud of his knowledge, said: "Mother, you are an ignorant female, and in that a mere girl. Brâhmaṇa, Kshatriya, Vaiṣhya, Shûdra, female, male—all such differences merely arise from our ignorance.[7] In the eyes of the

[1] Nâstikavâda. [2] The city of Benares. [3] Adhîṣhvarî. [4] Bhaktâvatâra.
[5] Ṣhaktivâda. [6] Steps leading down to the river. [7] Ajnâna.

wise everything is, in a spiritual sense, in substance, Brahman. You may pass over me, and will commit no sin thereby." The girl looked greatly grieved, and said : "Lord, you yourself have said that I am an ignorant female, and have no competence for such spiritual knowledge.[1] I can by no means step over a Brâhmaṇa. Be good enough to raise your feet so that I may pass." Ṣhangkarâchâryya was displeased, and said : "Mother, I have repeatedly told you what to do, and yet you will not hear me ? My body is extremely tired, and, moreover, suddenly I feel, I know not why, as if I had not the ṣhakti (strength) even to raise my feet." The girl, who appeared to be somewhat frightened, said : "Lord, pardon me. Had I but known that you had not the ṣhakti to do so, I would never have asked you to raise your feet. I am one who is not fit to understand your spiritual knowledge, and have, in consequence, disturbed you repeatedly through my great fear at having to step over a Brâhmaṇa. Had you, instead of speaking of spiritual knowledge, told me, at the beginning, plainly that 'you had not the ṣhakti to move,' I would myself have raised your feet and gone down to the water. However that may be, if you will now let me, I shall myself raise your feet." Ṣhangkarâchâryya was greatly abashed at these words of the girl, and said : "You may do what you like." The girl then raised his feet with her own hands and put them aside, and then went down to the water, filled the pitcher, and ascended the steps. Ṣhangkarâchâryya, who was lying prostrate with fatigue, called to the girl, and said : "Mother, I have been long thirsty, give me a little water." The girl smiled, and asked : "Why ? You are lying on the water-side. How is it, then, that you suffer from thirst ?" Ṣhangkarâchâryya replied : "How many times more need I tell you that I have not the ṣhakti to rise ?" The girl then rolled her eyes,[2] and making the banks of the Ganges resound with

[1] Tattva-jnâna.

[2] In surprise and resentment.

Her solemn voice, said : " Ṣhangkara, is it not you who ignore Ṣhakti ?" Wounded by the echo of that heart-penetrating solemn sound, Ṣhangkarâchâryya, who had been like a sleeping child startled by lightning, shut his eyes for a moment, and then, as he fearfully opened them, he saw that in the angry eyes of the girl waves of unbearable light, such as might proceed from hundreds of suns and moons, were playing. Instantly, as he cried " Mother !" and with outstretched arms rushed to clasp Her feet, the play of that playful Devî closed. The great light of Her who is Light itself,[1] which had shown itself in the form of a girl, disappeared. None but a kindred sufferer can understand the darkness into which Ṣhangkarâchâryya sunk upon the disappearance of that light. The summit of pride of Brahmajnâna[2] to which he had risen was shattered into pieces by a single glance of the daughter of the King of Mountains,[3] as the summit of a mountain is shattered by a thunderbolt. Then, like a blind man who has fallen, like a child which has lost its mother, he wept loudly, and crying, " O my Mother, where have you gone ?" ran with breathless speed towards the temple of Annapûrṇâ. Now the mother's son belongs to the Mother, and goes to the Mother's temple crying, " Mother !" Although there was nothing strange in this, yet the sight of such an unprecedented change in Ṣhangkarâchâryya, the sceptic about Ṣhakti, charmed the Ṣhâktas with the greatness of the Mother. The temple-yard was filled with their cry : " Victory to the Mother of the world." Surrounded on all sides by the assembly of Ṣhâkta devotees, Ṣhangkarâchâryya came to the door of the temple of the Râjrâjeṣhvarî[4] of the three worlds, the Queen[5] of the Lord[6] of Kâṣhî, and, trembling with fear at having committed so grave an offence, placed his head on the shrine of the feet touched

[1] Jyotirmayî.
[2] Knowledge of Brahman.
[3] The Devî, who had thus appeared to the philosopher.
[4] Queen of Queens.
[5] Adhîṣhvarî.
[6] Iṣhvara.

by the heads of Suras and Asuras, of Âdyâ Ṣhakti, the Mother of the world. Then, weeping, he said: "O Mother, Ṣhiva is able to maintain His Lordship only if He is united with Ṣhakti; otherwise (if He is separated from Ṣhakti) He is unable not merely to maintain His Lordship, but even (to maintain His own existence) to move His eyes. Explained in another way: According to Tantra, Ṣhakti is denoted by the letter 'i.'[1] Ṣhiva is Ṣhiva so long only as He is joined with Ṣhakti—that is, with 'i.' The instant He is separated from Ṣhakti,—that is, from 'i'—He ceases to be Ṣhiva, and becomes a motionless Ṣhava [corpse]. Thou art, therefore [Âdyâ Ṣhakti] an object of worship to even Hari, Hara, Virinchi,[2] and others who are themselves worshipped by the world. O Mother, how am I, who have done no act of religious merit, able to bow my head to, or hymn thy feet [the lotus-feet, difficult of attainment by the three worlds, at which Brahmâ and other Devas lay their heads]—that is to say, unless Thou thyself reveal it, who has the power to know the Ṣhakti-tattva, which is in reality Thyself? Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara, who know but a part only of Thy greatness, have sought shelter at Thy feet. That tattva is not revealed to any who have not a store of religious merits acquired by Sâdhana in many a previous birth. It is not within the power of Jîvas to know the nature of Târâ,[3] who is beyond the reach of mind and speech. It is therefore that a Jîva fails to know Thee, O Mother, even though he lies on Thy lap. O Mother, such is my state to-day. Out of fear for the offence I have committed, I have not the courage either to make hymn or to bow to Thee."

In this manner Ṣhangkarâchâryya made hymn to the Mother of the world by one hundred and three verses, in which he described Her appearance, qualities, and great-

[1] Called Vâmakshi or Vâmanetra (left eye), also Ratî.

[2] Vishṇu, Ṣhiva, Brahmâ.

[3] That is, the tattva of Târâ, one of the Mahâvidyâs (see Introduction).

ness. In conclusion he said: "To make hymn to Thee with words uttered by Thy grace is like the waving of lights[1] before the sun in his worship, or the preparation of Arghya[2] for the moon with the particles of water secreted by a moon-gem,[3] or the offering libations of its own water to the sea."

Thus gratified, Ṣhangkarâchâryya made provision so that none among the descendants of his disciples might ever be deprived of the wealth of the Sâdhana of Ṣhakti, or fall from Tântrik initiation, notwithstanding that they were Sannyâsins in the Vaidik cult. For this reason we see the Yantra of Ṣhrî[4] established wherever there are Maṭhas,[5] temples, and the like, founded amongst such Daṇḍis[6] as are followers of Ṣhangkarâchâryya. This fact people daily see even at the present time, except that it is in some places openly displayed, and in some places kept secret, as Sâdhakas, who know the secret, are fully aware.

However that may be, we have something to say about the spiritual error of Bhagavân Ṣhangkarâchâryya, an incarnation of Ṣhangkara, in the incident described above. Bhagavân Ṣhangkarâchâryya was an incarnation of Ṣhiva, who is Ṣhakti Herself. It is extremely astonishing that He who has in His original form laid His breast under the feet of Mahâṣhakti, and sunk in Brahma-bliss by resigning Himself to the Brahma-form of Brahmamayî, should, in His incarnate form, commit such an error in respect of Ṣhakti-tattva. We are therefore led to think that it was in order to shatter the pride of knowledge, consisting of eternal ignorance, which filled the followers of the Vedântik system of philosophy, who were advocates of the Mâyâ doctrine,[7] deluded by the Mâyâ of

[1] Ârati, or the waving of lights in worship before an image.

[2] An offering made to show respect to a person on meeting him, or to a Devatâ.

[3] Chandrakânta maṇi.

[4] The Devî.

[5] Monastic establishments.

[6] A class of high Sannyâsins.

[7] The Mâyâvâda, which speaks of Mâyâ as Avidyâ only, and not (ignoring the true nature of Ṣhakti) as both Vidyâ and Avidyâ.

Mahâmâyâ, that he first ignored the existence of Her who is perfect and eternal Brahman, and then proclaimed the greatness of the Mother of the world by holding, through Her grace, the ever-triumphant banner of the Tantra Ṣhâstra in his own hand. Otherwise, it is not to be believed that the author of the hymn of which we have quoted the beginning and the end, and which bespeaks a deep and impressive knowledge of the entire Tantra Ṣhâstra, was a disbeliever in Ṣhakti, or did not know or worship Her.

Gaura Chandra,[1] the full-moon of the Sea of Gaura,[2] descending upon Navadvîpa,[3] also belonged to a branch of Bhagavân Ṣhangkarâchâryya's followers. His Guru who initiated him in asceticism,[4] was Svâmî Keṣhava Bhâratî, a disciple in the line of the disciples of the Ṣhangkara community. Intelligent Sâdhakas will, therefore, easily understand in what system Gaura Chandra was initiated, and according to which he was accustomed to worship. Still, we shall try to deal with this subject in its proper place, so far as it will lie in our power.

Sâdhaka, whom shall I recognize as a greater philosopher than Bhagavân Ṣhangkarâchâryya, who played his part in the above-mentioned sport ? Where is the advocate of the theory that Ṣhakti is unconscious,[5] who is himself thereby lowered to the state of some unconscious thing, whose words I shall respect ? If Ṣhangkarâchâryya, an incarnation of Him who possesses all Ṣhaktis, lost the power (ṣhakti) of raising his feet because he said, " There is no Ṣhakti," who are you and I that we should raise our heads to say, " There is no Ṣhakti " ?

He is very deeply mistaken who thinks that he can understand the ṣhakti-tattva by means of philosophical arguments, discussions, and reasonings. If She were a treasure to be acquired by arguments, discussions, and

[1] The Vaishṇavite Saint Chaitanya. [2] The country Gaur or Bengal.
[3] The town of Nadia, where Chaitanya was born.
[4] Sannyâsa. [5] Jaḍa

reasonings, for whose sake, then, are sâdhana and bhajana[1] required? Ṣhangkarâchâryya did not know Her by means of philosophy (darṣhana). He knew Her in consequence of seeing Her (darṣhana).[2] He was not a blind philosopher, like the paṇḍits we meet nowadays. His spiritual eye was painted and made brilliant by the collyrium paint[3] of the light of Her who is ever stainless.[4] The Mother of the world showed Herself to him, and that sight (darṣhana) made him (one who sees or) a philosopher (dârṣhanik). But we unfortunate Jîvas of the Kali age are becoming blind in the name of philosophy (darṣhana). This is our ill-fortune.[5]

Is he not the greatest of sceptics[6] who finds it in him to say that Ṣhakti "does not exist"—the Ṣhakti whose existence has given to Bhagavân the name of "possessor of all Ṣhaktis"? What can be a greater folly than that you, O Jîva, should proceed to discuss the existence or non-existence of the Ṣhakti, whose greatness is preached by Bhagavân; the Ṣhakti whose greatness is such that Bhagavân Himself has, in order that it may be proclaimed, ordained that the name of Ṣhakti should be uttered first, and then that of the possessor of ṣhakti, declaring that he who shall fail to utter the names as Râdhâ-Kṛishṇa, Lakshmî-Nârâyaṇa, Umâ-Maheṣhvara, Gaurî-Ṣhangkara,[7] and Sîtâ-Râma is guilty of a sin as great as that of murdering a Brâhmaṇa. In the uncrossable ocean of Her existence a Brahmâṇḍa-cauldron is less even than a bubble of water.[8]

Is it the Mother's fault or the son's ill-fortune that

[1] Worship.

[2] A play on the word "darṣhana."

[3] Anjana used to give brilliance to the eyes.

[4] Niranjana.

[5] A play on the word darshana. Philosophy is so called, as it is supposed to give sight; but is here the cause of blindness.

[6] Literally, the great-grandfather of sceptics.

[7] That is, the names of the Ṣhaktis are placed first, and those of the Devas second.

[8] The universe, which is shaped like a cauldron, is but as a bubble in the limitless ocean of Her being.

living in that bubble and even sinking in that ocean, you and I do not see Her; that sitting in the Mother's lap, nourished by the Mother's milk, and tended by the soft fingers of the Mother's hand, the son, born blind, does not see Her? Who does not take birth in his Mother's womb? But for that reason everyone does not have the good fortune of seeing his mother. The graceful and refulgent beauty of the three eyes[1] of the three-eyed Devî are reflected in the mirror of the eye of him only whose eye of knowledge has been opened by Her mercy, and has been smeared by his guru's kindness with the collyrium paint of love. Ṣhangkarâchâryya has said: "What power has Jîva to see that beauty of Thine, which is visible only to Paramaṣhiva?"

So I say, O brother Sâdhaka, do not forget the Mother's authority and power because you have not yourself got the power to see Her. And you, community of false devotees, who see a difference between Ṣhakti and possessor of ṣhakti, who are partial on the Father's side and inimical to the Mother's side, to you, too, I say, whichever form a Jîva may worship, be it the form of a male or that of a female, the door of liberation is free to him.

He who worships the Father has not to wait to worship the Mother before he can secure liberation; but know it for certain that not even the Father's father has the power to liberate him who worships the Father in a spirit of antagonism to the Mother. Ṣhumbha, Niṣhumbha, Jambha, Mahishâsura,[2] and many others, worshipped the Father in this spirit. But I know not how vast is the mercy of Her who is full of mercy. Enmity cannot touch Her in the least, so that the Devî with dishevelled hair, whom immortals worship, liberated them from the bonds of existence even when in war with them. Nevertheless, by placing Himself in the form of a corpse under the Mother's feet, the

[1] Including the central eye of wisdom.

[2] Daityas or demonic beings so named (see Introduction and *ante*).

Father showed to the Daityas that the garland of pearls of liberation lies ever set and ever stored under the feet of the Devî with dishevelled hair. To put on that garland one must place one's heart under those feet and lose one's self. It is with the view of this truth[1] that thoughtful devotees of subtle insight have said: "Everyone says 'Father, Father!' no one says 'Mother!' But in the Father's court[2] the final decision is that which is the Mother's command."

So I say: "O you who discriminate between the Father and the Mother, human birth is difficult of attainment. Open, then, the door of your heart while there is yet time, and with tears in your eyes say for once·

"'A bad son may sometimes be born,
But a bad mother never.'"[3]

[1] Tattva.

[2] Durbar or court held by Râjas, etc.

[3] Kuputro jayeta kvachedapi kumâtâ nabhavati. This is a quotation from Shangkarâchâryya's hymn, "Devyaparâdhakshamâpana stotra," translated in A. and E. Avalon's "Hymns to the Goddess."

CHAPTER X

WORSHIP OF THE FIVE DEVATÂS

BRAHMAN with attributes is the object of adoration in the Gâyatrî worship already mentioned, although attributeless Brahman is the goal. That worship, however, is sufficient and adequate only for the sandhyâ-prayers[1] said thrice a day. The sandhyâ-prayers may be the only and highest form of worship for him who, disregarding the dualistic Brahmâṇḍa, has profoundly understood the monistic truth, and lost all false dualistic notions concerning the body, senses, mind, and life. Although in the âchamana[2] of sandhyâ, there is something of self-resignation which belongs to the province of dualistic perception, yet that is intended only for the casting off of sin. For this reason, this part may be called self-purification instead of self-resignation. However that may be, the loving heart of a devotee cannot rest satisfied with this part only. The sandhyâ cannot gratify the heart's desire of Him whose earnest wish is to place everything which he can call his own at Her feet, and to be taken as a slave in return for Her love.

From the Gâyatrî I learn that Mahâṣhakti, under the aspects of Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Maheṣhvara, is the creatrix, preservatrix, and destructrix according to differences which exist between the three guṇas of sattva, rajas, and tamas. But this amount of understanding does not satisfy the mind and heart. Why this play of Hers?

[1] See Introduction.

[2] A portion of the sandhyâ ritual (see Introduction).

What is the process by which this play is regulated? What was Her true aspect[1] before this play, and what will Her aspect be after it? Being Herself full of play,[2] how is She detached from it? How can Jîva, who is but a mere puppet, pass beyond this play and enter into Her real Self? A Jîva's heart is naturally anxious to have the answer to these and other questions.

Secondly, suppose that I understand from the Gâyatrî as much as I can of these matters.[3] I then understand that She is pure Brahman whose substance is existence, consciousness, and bliss. But what do I gain by that? I am an impure, unconscious[4] Jîva. I hear that the sea contains innumerable gems. But what is that to me? The gems of the sea are in the sea, and my poverty is in me. So long as I do not secure those gems in my own hand, it will not end my miseries to hear or know of them. So long as I do not see Her with my eyes and bless myself by holding Her to my breast, there is no peace for me. I am therefore in want of a means whereby I can secure Her. I shall do so the day on which my egoism will be destroyed by the intense fire[5] of spiritual knowledge. But my gross intellect, mind, and life are not satisfied with such a subtle form of attainment. I am a Jîva with ten senses, and possessed of mind and life, and these things form the only hope and support of my egoism. I want a suitable way of obtaining Her without losing these things. Âtmâ has never any happiness or sorrow.

My sangsâra exists in order to make the mind happy. If I cannot make that mind happy, if I am only to meet Her after the mind is dead, then it is the same to me whether I meet Her at all or not. And if the mind is to die, with whom will that meeting take place?[6] This too, is a serious problem. For this reason I want Her

[1] Svarûpa. [2] Lîlâmayî. [3] Tattvas
[4] Jaḍa—that is here, spiritually unconscious. [5] Tejas.
[6] *Cf.* the saying: "I do not want to be sugar, but to eat it."

whom my mind wants. This is no doubt a very great expectation. But what can I do? I shall not be able to make my mind suited to Her, so that She must make Herself suited to my mind, for She or He is possessed of all ṣhaktis. Mind is not able to suit itself to Her, for She is beyond the reach of mind—that is to say, mind cannot see Her or become suited to Her by its own power. But She dwells in everything and sees everything, so that it is neither impossible nor astonishing for Her to become suited to the mind as She sees it. For my mind is happy if it can form a sangsâra with the senses. Its concern is with happiness, and it is as much ready to form a sangsâra with persons who are in no way connected with it, provided it can be happy with them, as it is to forsake father, mother, wife, and son, if it does not get happiness from them. If, therefore, it obtains happiness, —that is to say, if the senses which are its limbs obtain objects upon which they can function; if the eye can see Her; if the ear can hear Her words; if the skin can touch Her; if in this manner and in every way She can provide happiness to the mind, the life, the body, and the senses; if by withdrawing all the functions of the senses to the mind[1] She can immerse them in the sea of joy along with the mind—then the mind may forsake father, mother, wife, son, and others, and live as in a sangsâra with Her.

If it is happy, why should it consider as to who is its own, and who is not its own? To judge of happiness by relationship is not a sure mode of judgment. On the contrary, relationship should be judged by happiness. It is because happiness is concerned that She, who has no connection with even seven generations above me, is my (better) half. This is an instance of a person's happi-

[1] That is, withdraw the senses from external objects and concentrate them in the mind, in order that supersensual perception may be had of Her. The senses are the effects of the mind, and can be withdrawn into it by yoga, when the Jiva acquires the power of spiritual perception.

ness in the sangsâra. If the mind in the sangsâra loves to be occupied with the sangsâra, then why not form that sangsâra with Her ? She then becomes father, mother, wife, son, friend, and companion. Devotion, respect, affection, and love, whatever I have to bestow, I bestow on Her. If I can be happy by feeding, clothing, and decking Her, just as one is said to be happy in this sangsâra by feeding, clothing, and decking one's children ; if the sangsâra can be kept up with Her in this manner, then it will not be long before the mind is made suited to Her—that is, just as She would have it to be.[1]

But in order thus to make my mind suited to Her, it is necessary that She should first be suited to my mind. It will not do for Her to remain sitting in the orb of Sûrya[2] or the sphere of Âgni,[3] but She must come and sit in the circle[4] of my heart. I shall not be able to contemplate different forms of Her at different times—viz., three forms[5] in three sandhyâs. She must remain for ever fixed in one form, whether standing, sitting, or in any other posture. It will not do that I shall meet Her in three sandhyâs during daytime, but never during the night. Like the flow of the Ganges towards the sea, the flow of my sight towards Her will be uninterrupted. Whatever else may cross my sight, it will turn only towards Her.

Unless I desire, all distinctions of time, space, and person will cease to exist. In whatever state, under whatever circumstances, I may live, in happiness or in sorrow, in prosperity or in adversity, my life will encircle Her beauteous feet. If, answering these expectations of mine, You first make yourself suited to my mind, then

[1] If the sâdhaka's sangsâra consists of Her alone—that is to say, if he is occupied with nothing but Her—then the frame of his mind will easily become what She likes, so that he may be in a position to enjoy Her company constantly.

[2] The sun. [3] Fire. [4] Maṇḍala.

[5] Rûpa ; an allusion to the three dhyânas of the sandhyâ.

I shall make myself suited to Your mind. It is in order to fulfil these loving expectations of the Sâdhaka, that She who is perfect and eternal Brahman has provided for Tântrik initiation in addition to initiation in the Gâyatrî. And Her mercy appears all the more from the fact that even those who have no competency[1] for initiation in the Gâyatrî have been made eligible by Her for Tântrik initiation. All persons, and whether men or women, are equally eligible for it. This Door of liberation is ever free to the access of even the basest and lowest born Chaṇḍâla.[2]

We do not observe distinction of caste when stepping into a ferry-boat; no distinction is made between sinful and virtuous men as regards bathing in the Ganges; and no distinction exists between unmoving objects, moving objects, insects, and the like dying in the region of Benares in respect of their right to Nirvâṇa liberation. In the same way in the boat in which we cross the sea of existence, in the sacred water of the Ganges of knowledge, and in the Benares of Tântrik initiation extending over the whole Brahmâṇḍa, no bar is set against the initiation of any. In short, just as fire will appropriate anything to itself, so the Tantra will appropriate anyone to the Brahman. The Tântrik form of initiation is therefore an unfailing means, having no equal, for the liberation of the three worlds.

Why not, then, worship in this manner any one of the three Purusha aspects and the three Ṣhakti aspects specified in the Gâyatrî-tattva? There is no fear of such an objection here; for Brahmâ, Vishṇu, Ṣhiva, Ṣhakti, and Sûrya, are the five Devatâs mentioned in the Gâyatrî. Of these the worship of Brahmâ, in the Tântrik form, has been abolished by Devarshi Nârada's curse, and in the place of Brahmâ the worship of Gaṇeṣha, who is an avatâra of Vishṇu, has been established; in fact, the worship of none of these five

[1] Adhikâra. [2] One of the lowest castes.

Devatâs is outside the scope of the Gâyatrî-tattva. It is, therefore, superfluous to say that it is the Devatâs of worship according to the Gâyatrî-tattva who are also objects of worship according to the Tântrik initiation.

Moreover, in the Gâyatrî Mantra five attributive epithets have been used—namely, pervader of the universe, creator of the world, object of worship, playful[1] Deva, and director of Jîvas' intelligence.[2] The Ṣhakti qualified by these five attributes is eternally seated in each one of the five Devatâs of worship. The five aspects[3] are all eternal and perfect Brahman. The Ṣhakti of will, the Ṣhakti of action, and the Ṣhakti of knowledge[4] are infinite and unlimited in each of them. They are all equally powerful in creating, preserving and destroying, for He is five in one and one in five. Secondly, the aspects for worship in the Gâyatrî-tattva are six,[5] while the worshipper—that is, I and my mind—are one. It is impossible for a Jîva to adore six aspects with equal love in the same mind. The love, which is to sound constantly in the mind like the note of a tânapurâ,[6] will be interrupted if transferred from one aspect to another. Ṣhâstra itself has said:

"For one whose mind travels from one state[7] to another, and so on, there is no liberation," for it is impossible for such a one to perform simple-minded Sâdhana." Again: "From morning to evening, and from evening to morning, all that I do, O Mother of the world, is your worship." Thus, to resign oneself wholly day and night to the lotus-feet of the supreme Devatâ; to be dependent on Her protection only by maintenance of

[1] Lîlâmaya. [2] *Vide ante*, p. 360, and Introduction.
[3] Mûrtis.
[4] Ichchâ, Kriyâ, and Jnâna Ṣhaktis (see Introduction).
[5] That is, three Purusha forms—Brahmâ, Vishṇu, Maheṣhvara—and three Ṣhakti forms—Brahmâṇî, Vaishṇavî, Rudrâṇî.
[6] A stringed instrument used by singers in keeping up the note.
[7] Bhâva.

an intimate relation with Her at all times, whether in adversity or in prosperity, awaking or sleeping, in life or in death ; to feel truly in the heart and say, " My mind knows nothing but Thy beautiful feet " ; to sink in the untraversable sea of the thought[1] that " I am Mother and the Mother is mine "—such a whole-hearted love for one cannot be formed in respect of six aspects. I know that She is one in six ; but my mind cannot be two instead of one in the unbeginning and unending flow of time. How can I offer my one mind to the feet of six persons ? How can I love six persons as I love my life ? For this reason I must accept some one aspect as the centre of the joy of love, making it the support of my life. Though all aspects are but really Her, yet the three worlds do not possess another aspect similar to that of which the Mantra restores my life, of which the Yantra is the amulet for my safety, and of which the Tantra[2] is the occupation of my whole lifetime, whether that aspect be dark blue like crushed collyrium,[3] or fair like a mass of heated gold,[4] or white like a mountain of silver.[5] " With Thyself alone, O Mother, can Thyself be compared," and " O Mother, what Thou art to me, Thou alone art that to me." The sweetness of Her beauty is not to be judged by these physical eyes of the Jîva. Who but She, who is the only beauty in the world, and who is full of love for devotees, can say whom the eye of love will consider beautiful ?[6] Here Deva[7] Hanumân, a guide[8] for the journey to the sea of love, has said : " Although from the point of view of spirit there is no difference between Nârâyaṇa, the husband of Lakshmî, and Râmachandra, the husband of

[1] Bhâva.

[2] Cult, authority.

[3] The Devî as Ṣhyâmâ, Kâlî, Târâ, etc.

[4] The Devî as Umâ, Gaurî, Durgâ, etc.

[5] Ṣhiva is thus described.

[6] That is, She determines for each devotee that which he will regard as most beautiful.

[7] Used honorifically of the monkey Hanumân, the son of Pavana.

[8] Guru ; because of his great devotion to Râmachandra.

Jânakî, yet lotus-eyed Râmachandra alone is my all." That is to say, although there is no real difference between the aspects of Râma and Nârâyaṇa, yet Râmachandra is the full-moon of the sea of my love, and consequently there is nothing in the three worlds so charming to my mind, life, and eyes, as the aspect of lotus-eyed Râma, fair of colour, like a young blade of grass. Bhagavân, also, is ever bound by the tender ties of this love, so dear to the Sâdhaka. We therefore read in such books as the Purâṇas that whenever that incarnation of devotion, the son[1] of Pavana[2] went to Vaikuṇṭha, Bhagavân, through love for the devotee, changed His usual aspect of Nârâyaṇa into that of Râma, and, causing Mahâlakshmî to appear as the daughter of Janaka, sat with Her on the same seat. This love play of Brahman is fully displayed to a devotee. Bhagavân has therefore said:[3] "Any devotee who seeketh to worship with faith any such aspect, I verily bestow the unswerving faith of that man." He alone presides in all appearances.[4] He alone is the seat of all forms of love. Of whatever aspect a Sâdhaka may be the worshipper, it is He alone, the only desire-gratifying tree,[5] who, by the play of the sacred fountain of his love, can cool the Jîva's heart, scorched by the threefold heat.[6] If He be attained there is no need for the protection of another. The Sâdhaka has therefore loudly said, with arms thrown up in joy: "I do not wish to look at another. I do not strive for another. I do not remember another. I do not want to seek the protection of another. My only prayer is that I may never forget in my heart the fair form of Tripurâsundarî."[7]

[1] Hanumân.
[2] Deva of the Wind.
[3] Bhagavadgîtâ, chap. vii.; Ṣhloka 21.
[4] Mûrti.
[5] Kalpataru.
[6] Tâpatraya, or threefold miseries (see p. 50, *ante*).
[7] The Devî, so called, according to the Kâlikâ Purâṇa, because She is everywhere triple, and, according to the Tripurârṇava, because She dwells in the three Nâḍis (see Bhâskararaya, Comm. Lalitâ, verse 125, and Benedictory Ṣhloka).

"Bhagavân Maheṣhvara, crowned with the crescent moon, is my refuge. Maheṣhvarî, the daughter of the King of Mountains, is my refuge. I again say that they both form my only refuge. I will not seek the shelter of any other Devatâ."

"I do not believe in, I do not believe in any Deva whose throat is not marked with the blue stain caused by the drinking of poison,[1] whose body is not decked with ornaments of serpents; whose hand does not hold a pot made of a skull, who has not a shining eye on his forehead, whose forehead is not adorned with the crescent moon, and whose left side is unoccupied by his better half."[2] By the words "I do not believe" is not meant that I do not admit the existence of any other Deva, or that I have no love or respect for Him. What is meant is that there is no necessity for me to believe in any other Deva for the purpose of worship, for I am ever gratified with Him whom I have got. Just as a chaste woman[3] may love her husband only with a pure attachment in which none else has a share, so a Sâdhaka may bestow his love for the Lord of the world on one Person only. Initiation in the Mantra of one Devatâ is necessary in order that the mind and Âtmâ (spirit) may have this right, and this initiation is the Tântrik initiation.

A system of fivefold initiation is found to prevail in the families of many accomplished Sadhakas. Many people express great astonishment at this form of initiation; for it is an extremely troublesome and almost useless affair to be initiated in the Mantras of the five Devatâs, Ṣhiva, Ṣhakti, Sûrya, Vishṇu, and Gaṇeṣha, and to attempt to worship them all with equal devotion. It is no doubt so if all of them have to be worshipped with equal devotion. But as a matter of fact, it is not a question of equal worship. The worship of every worshipper is fivefold; for in the centre of the circle

[1] At the churning of the ocean (Ṣhiva Nîlakaṇṭha).

[2] Male and female form one complete whole, of which the male is the right side, and the female the left and better half.

[3] Satî.

is the worshipper's own Ishṭadevatâ,[1] and on each of His four sides the four other Devatâs preside. The only peculiarity, in this respect, of the fivefold initiation is that in this form of initiation a person takes from the mouth of his Guru the Mantras of all the five Devatâs, while in other forms of initiation Mantras of only one Devatâ are thus taken. Initiation in any one Mantra entitles a Sâdhaka to all Mantras. Although want of initiation in the Mantras of all the five Devatâs in no way interferes with this right, yet the speciality of initiation by a Guru in all the Mantras is that this right is thereby made to bear fruit more speedily.

Secondly, in their anxiety for the welfare of their descendants, accomplished and non-discriminating[2] Sâdhakas, crest-gems of Kula,[3] understood it to be great imprudence to allow of the possibility of their families being ruined through the great sin of bearing ill-feeling towards any Deva. They therefore provided against this contingency by prescribing initiation in the Mantras of all the five Devatâs, so that no one might think that because he was a Ṣhâkta, Vishṇu was not a Devatâ for his worship, and that consequently it was not necessary for him to bear respect and devotion for Vishṇu ; or that because he was a Vaishṇava, Ṣhakti was not a Devatâ for his worship, and consequently it was useless for him to worship Ṣhakti.

TÂNTRIK INITIATION.

The moment a Brâhmaṇa is initiated in the Gâyatrî Mantra, he becomes fundamentally entitled to the five forms of worship. The speciality of Tântrik initiation is that it matures this title to the point of bearing fruit.[4] Tântrik initiation indicates the sprout-

[1] The Devatâ selected by the Sâdhaka for his special worship.

[2] That is, between one Devatâ and another in the knowledge that all are one.

[3] Tântrik doctrine.

[4] A person may be qualified to do a thing, but it does not follow that without further aid he can accomplish it : and this aid the Tântrik initiation supplies.

ing state of that,[1] of which the seed is sown by initiation in the Gâyatrî. Bhagavân Ṣhrîkṛishṇa has therefore said to Uddhava, the crest-gem of devotees, in the Ṣhrîmadbhâgavata :[2]

"In all parvas[3] during the year one should perform my Yâtrâ[4] and Vali,[5] and should take both Tântrik and Vaidik initiation, and observe Vrata[6] in my name."

Again : "My worship is of three kinds—namely, Vaidik, Tântrik, and mixed (Paurâṇik). I should therefore, be worshipped according to the rules prescribed in the three Ṣhâstras of Veda, Tantra, and Purâṇa."

In the Tantra Ṣhâstra, Bhagavân Maheṣhvara also has laid down the same rule, drawing, however, a distinction between the ages.

In the Kubjikâ Tantra it is said : "In the three Yugas of Satya, Treta, and Dvâpara, Devas should be worshipped according to rules prescribed in Ṣhruti and Smṛiti. In the Kali Yuga Devas should be worshipped only according to rules prescribed in the Tantra. In the Kali Yuga, Devas are not pleased with worship performed according to rule laid down in any other Ṣhâstra."[7]

In another Tantra[8] this has been more clearly stated.

"Performance of Dharma[9] should follow the Vaidik method in the Satya Yuga, the method of Smṛiti in the Treta Yuga, the Paurâṇik method in the Dvâpara Yuga, and the Tântrik method in the Kali Yuga."

The following passage occurs in the Puraṣhcharaṇa Rasollâsa : "In the Kali Yuga, in Bhâratavarsha,[10] the Dhyânas[11] and Mantras prescribed in Tantra are proper. O Devî of restless glances, O fair-faced lady, the Dhyânas

[1] Tattva. [2] Eleventh Skandha.
[3] Specified occasions for religious observances.
[4] Festivals such as Dolyâtrâ, Rathayâtrâ, etc.
[5] Worship. [6] See Introduction.
[7] See Introduction.
[8] Not stated, but a similar passage occurs in the Kulârṇava Tantra.
[9] Religious rites. [10] India.
[11] Formulæ of meditation (see Introduction).

and Mantras prescribed in the Vedas, the Smṛitis, and the Purâṇas are never proper in Bhâratavarsha in the Kali Yuga."

In the Mahânirvâṇa Tantra it is said: "My beloved! In the Kali Yuga there is no other path but that path prescribed in Âgama.[1] O spouse of Ṣhiva, it has already been stated by me in Ṣhruti, Ṣmṛiti, Purâṇa, etc., that in the Kali Yuga the wise should worship Devas according to the rules prescribed in Âgama."[1]

"In the Kali Yuga the Mantras prescribed in Tantra are naturally efficacious,[2] speedily bear fruit, and are proper in Japa, Yajna,[3] and all other rites. The Mantras of the Veda were fruitful in Satya and other Yugas. In the Kali Yuga they are as impotent as venomless snakes, and are, as it were, dead. Just as the senses of figures pictured on a wall are without action, so in the Kali Yuga Mantras other than those prescribed in Tantra are unable to effect any result."

In the Dattâtreya Yâmala we read: "Just as a person without a guardian has no protection in the world, so a person without initiation has no protection, whether in this world or the next."

In the Gautamîya Tantra it is said: "Just as the sons of the twice-born[4] who have not received the sacred thread have no right to study the Veda and so forth, but acquire such right by investiture with the sacred thread, so the uninitiated twice-born have no right to recite[5] Mantras, worship Devas, and so forth, but acquire such right by initiation. For this reason, after investiture with the sacred thread, the twice-born should again purify themselves according to the Ṣhâstra revealed by Ṣhiva."[6]

The following is from the Kulârṇava Tantra: "Tapasyâ,[6] observance of rules,[7] observance of Vrata,[6] pil-

[1] The Tantra.
[2] Siddha.
[3] See Introduction.
[4] Members of the three superior castes.
[5] Japa.
[6] See Introduction.
[7] Niyama.

grimage to Tîrthas,[1] bodily restraint and other acts, are ineffectual if performed by one who is uninitiated. One should, therefore, by all means be initiated by a Guru."

In the Âgama Sandarbha it is said: "To take the Gâyatrî is the first initiation for the awakening of a knowledge of the Âtmâ."

For this reason worship of the Gâyatrî should come first and worship of another (Ishṭadevatâ) according to Tântrik initiation should follow. This is the proper Tattva[2] for the Brâhmaṇa, Kshatriya, and Vaiṣhya castes—that is to say, after first taking initiation in the Gâyatrî by the Sangskâra[3] of Upanayana,[4] one should be initiated according to Tantra in the Mantra of one's Ishṭadevatâ. For Sudras, for whom there is no Sangskâra of Upanayana, the Tântrik initiation alone is prescribed. In the Kali Yuga initiation in the Gâyatrî, though originally Vaidik, is acceptable only in the form prescribed in the Tantra Ṣhâstra.

The Mahânirvâṇa Tantra says: "This Sâvitrî,[5] who is Brahman, is as much Tântrik as Vaidik—that is to say, is proper both in Vaidik and Tântrik rites. O Devî! for this reason, when the Kali age is in strength, the twice-born are entitled to perform daily worship with the Gâyatrî Mantra alone of all Vaidik Mantras. But in the Kali age the Gâyatrî Mantra should be preceded by the Praṇava[6] in the case of Brâhmaṇas; by the Lakshmî-vîja[7] in the case of Kshatriyas; and by the Sarasvatî-vîja[8] in the case of Vaiṣhyas."

Besides this, the Vaidik Mantras which have been prescribed in Tântrik rites, such as the ten Sangskâras[3] and the like, have, in spite of their Vaidik origin, become Tântrik owing to their having been repeated by Maheṣh-

[1] Holy shrines. [2] Principle, doctrine, line of work.
[3] "Sacrament" (see Introduction). [4] Putting on of the sacred thread.
[5] Gâyatrî Mantra, as to which see Introduction.
[6] That is, "Om." [7] That is, "Ṣhring." [8] That is, "Aing."

vara and Maheṣhvarî in connection with the Tântrik Method. For this reason, rites performed with those Mantras in the Kali Yuga will not be fruitless.

"O Devî, without Sangskâras[1] the body is not purified, and therefore without them a person is not entitled to perform rites relating to Devas and Pitṛis.[2] Members of the Brâhmaṇa, and other castes who desire their welfare in this and the next world, should, therefore, by all means, and with care, receive the Sangskâras specified for their respective castes. Garbhâdhâna, Pungsavana, Sîmantonayana, Jâtakarma, Nâmakaraṇa, Nishkramaṇa, Annaprâsana, Chûdâkaraṇa, Upanayana, and Vivâha[3]—these are the ten Sangskâras prescribed in the Ṣhâstra for Brâhmaṇas, Kshatriyas, and Vaiṣhyas. Shûdras and people other than Shûdras—that is to say, the lowest classes of Shûdras—have no Upanayana; so that they have only nine Sangskâras, the twice-born castes only having the full ten Sangskâras. O fair Lady! these ten Sangskâras and all other rites, daily, incidental, or done to gain some reward,[4] should be performed according to the mode laid down by Ṣhambhu[5]—that is to say, according to the Tântrik method.

"My beloved, as Brahmâ, the revealer of the Vedas, I have already related the rules which should be followed in different rites. Mantras also have been indicated according to different castes, such as Brâhmaṇa and others, for all the Sangskâras and other rites. O Kâlikâ,[6] in the Satya, Treta, and Dvâpara ages,[4] in those rites the Praṇava[7] should precede those Mantras. O Parameṣhvarî, in the Kali age men should perform those rites, using the Mâyâvîja[8] at the commencement of those Mantras by the command of Ṣhangkara[9]—that is to say, according to the Tantra Ṣhâstra. In Nigama.

[1] Sacraments, see Introduction. [2] The forefathers (see Introduction).
[3] For a description of these various "sacraments," or Sangskâras see Introduction.
[4] See Introduction. [5] Ṣhiva. [6] The Devî.
[7] That is, "Om." [8] That is, "Hrîng." [9] Ṣhiva.

Âgama,[1] the Tantras (Gautama, Sanatkumâra, etc.), the Vedas, and the Sanghitâs,[2] I have laid down all Mantras. But in different ages they should be applied in different ways. O Mahâmâyâ, I shall next speak of Garbhâdhâna and other rites. Of these, hear first of all of the purification of the menses,[3] and next, in their order, of all the other rites."

From the above Sâdhakas will learn that initiation in the Gâyatrî, although originally Vaidik, is Tântrik in the Kali age.

Again: "In the Kali age men should by all means purify their Âtmâ by practice of truth, and perform all the duties prescribed for their respective castes according to the mode prescribed by Myself—that is to say, according to the Tantra Ṣhâstra. Dîkshâ,[4] Pûja,[5] Japa, Homa, Puraṣhcharaṇa,[6] Tarpaṇa,[7] Vrata,[6] (Upanayana) Vivâha, Pungsavana, Sîmantonnayana, Jâtakarma, Nâmakaraṇa, Chûḍâkaraṇa,[8] Antyeshṭhikriyâ,[9] Ṣhrâdhâ of forefathers (Pitṛis), should all be performed according to the Tantra Ṣhâstra. Ṣhrâdhâ[6] in Tîrthas, Vṛishotsarga,[10] Ṣhâradîya Utsava,[11] Yâtrâ,[12] Gṛihapraveṣha,[13] the putting on of new clothes and the like, consecration[14] of tanks, wells, and the like; rites to be performed on particular Tithis,[15] such as Pratipada,[16] beginning the construction of a house, the consecration of a house, the establishment of images of Devatâs, duties to be performed by day or

[1] See Introduction, *ante*. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] Ṛitusangskâra, which precedes Garbhâdhâna Sangskâra.

[4] Initiation.

[5] External worship, consisting of the rites beginning with Âvaraṇa-pûja, and ending with the worship of the principal Deity.

[6] See Introduction, *ante*. [7] Offering, oblations.

[8] These are various Sangskâras, or "Sacraments," described in Introduction. [9] Funeral rite. [10] Offering of bulls in Ṣhrâdhas.

[11] The autumnal festival, called Durgâ Pûja.

[12] The commencement of journey.

[13] The first entry into a house.

[14] Pratishṭha. [15] Lunar days.

[16] The first day after the new moon or the full moon.

night on specific occasions[1] in particular seasons or months, or every year, and all other acts daily or incidental to be done or not done, should be governed by the rules prescribed by me. If through delusion or wickedness, or irreverence, any Jîva fails to perform these acts according to Tântrik rules, he will be deprived of the fruits of all religious performances done by him, and will in the next world be born as a worm in dung. O Maheṣhvarî, should anyone in the Kali Yuga forsake my cult[2] and perform any rite according to another Ṣhâstra, that rite will bear for him fruit contrary to that which he desires. In the Kali age initiation in a cult opposed to mine (prescribed in a Ṣhâstra other than Tantra) will prove to be the destruction of the Sâdhaka's life. Pûja performed by him will be fruitless, Homa performed by him will be as the pouring of Ghee into ashes.[3] He will incur the anger of Devas, and will be in danger at every step. O Ambikâ, when the Kali age is ripe, should anyone who knows the command of the Ṣhâstra issued from My mouth, perform any rite according to another Ṣhâstra, such a one will be guilty of a great sin. And in particular, if anyone should perform the sacred thread ceremony,[4] or marriage, according to other methods than those prescribed by me, that man will remain in a terrible hell so long as the sun and moon endure. The performance of Upanayana according to rules laid down by any other Ṣhâstra will be equivalent to the sin of killing a Brâhmaṇa.[5] And the boy who in such case wears the sacred thread will be fallen[6] and more degraded than a Chaṇḍâla.[7] The thread, too, worn by him round his neck will be without virtue.[8] A wife married according to the rites of another Shâstra will not be a legitimate wife, according to Dharma.

[1] Parva. [2] Mata. [3] It should be poured into fire. [4] Upanayana.
[5] One of the six great sins. Upanayana is investiture with the sacred thread. [6] Vrâtya. [7] One of the lowest castes.
[8] That is, it will be a mere common piece of thread.

O Devî, leader in Kula, the man who marries her will sin. By intercourse with her he will daily commit the sin of having intercourse with a prostitute. Devas and the Pitṛis will not accept food and water from his hand. For the food offered by him is like excrement, and the water offered by him is like pus. The child born of that man and woman will be a bastard,[1] excluded from all religious acts,[2] and deprived of the right to perform all rites[3] relating to Devas and Pitṛis, and to be a follower of Kula. Should the image of a Devatâ be established by a method other than that ordained by Ṣhambhu, then such Devatâ will never appear in such image. The establishment of that image will, therefore, be useless as respects the next world, and will simply spell trouble and waste of money in this. Should anyone perform a Ṣhrâdha according to a method other than that prescribed in Tantra, then that Ṣhrâdha will be useless, and the person so performing it will go to hell with all his forefathers. Water offered by him will be like blood, and piṇḍa[4] offered by him will be like excrement. For this reason, man should by all means seek the shelter of the path prescribed by Shangkara. O Devî, what more need I say? Truly, truly, I say, any act performed according to any other method than that prescribed by Ṣhambhu will prove of no avail. Not to speak of religious merit to be acquired in future, even that which has been acquired in the past will be destroyed. There is no escape from hell for one who follows not the practices ordained by Ṣhambhu. O Maheṣhvarî, it is by the performance of daily and incidental religious acts according to the path described by me that a person performs your Sâdhana. Of these, worship with your Mantra Yantra, etc., form special Sâdhana. I shall now speak of the great remedy for the disease brought about by the Kali age. Do Thou listen to it."

1 Kânîna: child born of an unmarried woman.

2 Dharma.

3 Tântrik rites.

4 Balls of food offered in Ṣhrâdha to the Pitṛis.

LOSS OF TANTRAS AND TREATISES ON THIS SCRIPTURE.

From these commands of Bhagavân, who is the seat of the welfare of the three worlds, Sâdhakas will also surmise what irremediable loss has been caused to the Âryyan race through want of knowledge of, and practice according to, the Tantra Ṣhâstra. A large number of treatises on the Tantra Ṣhâstra are required for the proper performance of these religious rites and duties, and it is inevitable that there should be a longing in the hearts of Sâdhakas to collect such treatises for the purpose of meeting this requirement.

What, however, is lamentable in this respect, is that the store of medicines has been burnt before the appearance of the disease. The mountain-heap of religious treatises has been almost consumed at the very beginning of the Kali age in the powerful destructive fire of religious revolution. Later on in this book we shall not have the opportunity to mention the names of the treatises of which we have information from original books and compilations on Tantra, and which formed a part of the mass of treatises which has now been almost destroyed. For this reason, before we proceed to deal with the subject of Mantra-tattva,[1] we shall state here, for the information of Sâdhakas in connection with the present subject, the names of a few such treatises. From these they will be able to see that when compared with the mass of other treatises on Ṣhâstra,[2] they form such an insignificant mass that they are lost in the vast womb of the untraversable sea of Tantra so full of deep truths.

[1] The principle of Mantras.

[2] Apparently Tantra Shâstra, in which case the sense is that the treatises which the author enumerates form but an insignificant part of the vast mass of Tântrik books which are not found or enumerated.

Kâlîvilâsa, Kangkâlamâlinî, Muṇḍamâlâ, Mahisha mardinî, Mâyâtantra, Mâtṛikâbheda, Mâtṛikodaya, Mahânirvâṇa, Mâlinîvijaya, Mahânîla, Mahâkâlasanghitâ, Pherutantra, Bhairavatantra, Bhairavîtantra, Bhûtadâmara, Vîrabhadra, Vîjachintâmaṇi, Ekajaṭâ, Nirvâṇatantra, Tripurâsâra, Viṣhvasâra, Varadâtantra, Vâsudevarahasya, Vârâhîtantra, Vṛihadgautamîya, Varṇoddhṛititantra, Vishṇuyâmala, Vṛihannîla, Vṛihadyoni, Vishṇurahasya, Vâmakeṣhvara, Brahmajnânatantra, Brahmayâmala, Advaitatantra, Varṇavilâsa, Phetkârinî, Puraṣhcharaṇarasollâsa, Puraṣhcharanachandrikâ, Pichchhilâtantra, Prapanchasâra, Hangsa, Parameṣhvaratantra, Navaratneṣhvara, Nityatantra, Nîlatantra, Nârâyaṇâyaka, Niruttara, Nâradîya, Nâgâdina, Dakshiṇâmûrtisanghitâ, Yakshiṇîtantra, Yoginîtantra, Yonitantra, Yogasâra, Yogârṇava, Yoginîhṛidaya, Yogasvarodaya, Akâṣhabhairava, Râjarâjeṣhvarî, Râdhâtantra, Revatîtantra, Rudrayâmala, Râmârchanachandrikâ, Ṣhâvaratantra, Indrajâlatantra, Kâlîtantra, Kâmâkhyâtantra, Kâmadhenutantra, Kâlîkulasarvasva, Kumârîtantra, Kṛikalâsadîpikâ, Kâlottara, Kubjikâtantra, Kuloḍḍîṣha-Kulârṇava, Kulamûlâvatâra, Kulaṣûtra, Yakshadâmara, Sarasvatîtantra, Sâradâtantra, Ṣhaktisangama, Ṣhaktikâgamasarvasva, Urddhâmnâya, Svatantratantra, Sammohanatantra, Chînâchâra, Toḍalatantra, Buddhatantra, Ekavîrâtantra, Nigamakalpadruma, Nigama-kalpalatâ, Nigamasâra, Ṣhyâmârahasya, Târârahasya, Skandayâmala, Annadâkalpa, Annapûrṇâkalpa, Âgamakalpadruma, Agamatattvavilâsa, Âgamâdvaitanirṇaya, Âgamasandarbha, Âgamasâra, Âdityahṛidaya, Uttarakâmâkhyâ, Uttaratantra, Utpattitantra, Umâyâmala, Ekavîrâkalpa, Kamalâtantra, Kamalâvilâsa, Kâtyâyaṇîtantra, Kâlikârchanachandrikâ, Kâlîkalpa, Kâlîkulasadbhâva, Kâlîkulâmrita, Kâlîkulârṇava, Kâlîkrama, Kâlîhṛidaya, Kumârîkalpa, Kulachûḍâmani, Kulaprakâṣha, Kulasâra, Kulasundara, Kulâchâra, Kularṇava, Kṛishṇârchana-chandrikâ, Kaulârchanadîpikâ, Kaulâvalî, Kramachandrikâ,

Kramadîpikâ, Kṛiyâyogasâra, Kṛiyasâra, Gaṇeṣhavimarshiṇî, Gandharvatantra, Gâyatrîtantra, Guptadîkshâ, Guptasâdhanâ, Guptârṇava, Gurutantra, Gûḍhârthadîpikâ, Gautamîyatantra, Gaurîyâmala, Gheraṇḍasanghitâ, Chakravichâra, Chînatantra, Yâmala, Jnânatantra, Jnânârṇava, Dâmara, Tantrakaumudî, Tantrachûḍâmaṇi, Tantradîpikâ, Tantrapramoda, Tantraratna, Tantrarâja, Tantrasâgarasanghitâ, Tantrasâra, Tantrâdarṣha, Tântrikadarpaṇa, Tarâkhaṇḍa, Târânigama, Târâtantra, Târâpradîpa, Târâbhaktisudhârṇava, Târârṇava, Târâsâra, Tripurâkalpa, Tripurârṇava, Tripurâsârasamuchchaya, Trailokyasammohana, Dakshiṇâmûrtikalpa, Dattâtreyayâmala, Durgâkalpa, Devîyâmala, Devyâgama, Nandikeṣhvarasanghitâ, Nâradapancharâtra, Nârâyaṇîtantra, Nigamakalpalatâ, Nigamakalpasâra, Nigamatattvasâra, Nibandhatantra, Nṛisinghakalpa, Paramahangsapaṭala, Paradevîrahasya, Puraṣhcharaṇabodhinî, Pûjâsâra, Prapanchasâra, Prayogasâra, Vâlâvilâsa, Brahmayâmala, Brahmâṇḍatantra, Bhagavadbhaktivilâsa, Bhâvachûḍâmaṇi, Bhîmaparâkrama, Bhuvaneṣhvarîtantra, Bhuvaneṣhvarîpârijâta, Bhûtaṣhuddhitantra, Bhairavakosha, Bhairavayâmala, Bhairavasanghitâ, Matsyasûkta, Mantratantraprakâṣha, Mantradarpaṇa, Mantramahodadhi, Mantramuktâvalî, Mantraratna, Mantraratnâvalî, Mahâkapila-pancharâtra, Mahâkâlamohinîtantra, Mahânîlatantra, Mahâlingeṣhvaratantra, Mânasollâsa, Mâlinîtantra, Mṛiḍâṇîtantra, Merutantra, Yogachintâmaṇi, Revâtantra, Lakshasâgara, Lakshmîkulârṇava, Lingârchana, Varṇabhairava, Vâmadevatantra, Vâyavîyatantra, Vârâhîtantra, Vidyânandanivandha, Vidyotpattitantra, Vimalâtantra, Vîratantra, Vṛihattantrasâra, Vṛihattoḍalâtantra, Vṛihatṣhrîkramasangraha, Vṛihadrudrayâmala, Vṛihannirvâṇa, Vṛihanmâyâtantra, Vehâyasîmantrakosha, Vyomakeṣhasanghitâ, Vyomaratnatantra, Ṣhaktiyâmala, Ṣhaktitantra, Ṣhambhusanghita, Ṣhâkta, krama, Ṣhâktânandataranginî, Ṣhâmbhavîtantra, Ṣhâradâtantra, Sharâdatilaka, Shâṣhvata tantra, Ṣhikhariṇ-

tantra, Ṣhivatâṇḍava, Ṣhivadharma, Ṣhivarahasya, Ṣhivasangraha, Ṣhaivaratna, Ṣhaivâgama, Ṣhyâmâkalpalatâ, Ṣhyâmâpradîpa, Ṣhyâmârchanachandrikâ, Ṣhyâmasaparyâkrama, Ṣhyâmâsaparyâvidhi, Ṣhrîkulârṇava, Ṣhrîtattvachintâmaṇi, Ṣhrîrâmasangraha, Sanatkumâratantra, Samayâtantra, Samayâchâratantra, Sammohanatantra, Sarasvatîtantra, Sârachintamaṇi, Sârasangraha, Sârasamuchchaya, Svârasvatatantra, Singhavâhinîtantra, Siddhalaharîtantra, Siddhavidyâdîpikâ, Siddhântasâra, Siddheṣhvarîtantra, Somaṣhambhu, Sachchhandamaheṣhvara, Hayaṣhîrshapancharâtra, Haragaurîsamvâda, Uḍḍâmareṣhvara, Kâlikollâsa, Kulakalpalatâ, Kâmâkhyâdarpaṇa, Kaumârîvilâsa, Chaṇḍikârchanachandrikâ, Châmuṇḍâtantra, Aghorabhairava, Bhairavânandasâra, Nigamatattvaratna, Ṣhivasûtra, Nityaprayogasâra, Nirvâṇasanghitâ, Kâmarûpadîpikâ, Kâmeṣhvaratantra, Kâmâkhyâprayoga, Hanumatkalpa, Vijayâtantra, Pîṭharatnâkara. Kâtyâyaṇikalpa, Gaurîtantra, Mâtangîtantra, Shoḍaṣhîsanghitâ, Pârvatîtantra, Dâmarasûtra, Shaṭkarmadîpikâ, Shaṭkarmadîdhiti, Chakreṣhvara, Chakramukura, Kaulakṛityatattva, Kṛityatattva, Kṛityaprayoga, Agamârṇava, Abhichârakavacha, Ṣhyâmâsaparyâ, Siddhitantra.

We have mentioned the above, in order to give an idea of a fraction only of the names of the treatises of which authoritative mention has been made in the way of ordinary research. Besides this, we hear from Tântrik teachers[1] that the number of treatises on Tantra is one lakh,[2] and some say that it is even more. Moreover, a particularly trustworthy community holds that even now there is no cessation in the creation of Tantras, and that there will also be no such cessation in all the ages to come. Even now Bhagavân Gaṇapati Deva, at the command of his Father and Mother,[3] relates to Rishis,[4] inhabiting the Himalayas any Tantra which he hears

[1] Âchâryyas.

[2] 100,000.

[3] Ṣhiva and Pârvatî.

[4] See the Gâyatrî Tantra, chap. iv.

from them. Maharshis,[1] and accomplished Sâdhakas, the well-wishers of the three worlds, promulgate them therein through successive generations of disciples. As it is in this way that Tantras reach the earth, there can be nothing to wonder at if new Tantras daily appear in the world. Even to-day, in the discourse of the Father and the Mother of the three worlds [2] (the pair who are the Parabrahman), seated on a throne in the midst of the assemblage of Brahmâ and other Devas in the bejewelled temple of Kailâsa, the Tantra Ṣhâstra, which is Shabdabrahman[3] daily appears in new forms. Lost Tantras also are being recovered for the salvation of the race of sinners sunk in the sea of the sins of the profoundly sinful[4] Kali age. This is the unerring proclamation of the race of Sâdhakas based on knowledge gained by divine vision.

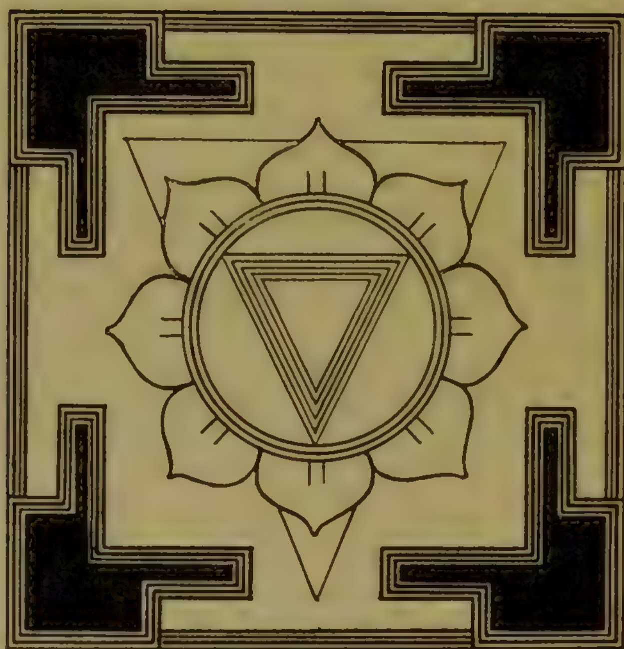
[1] Great seers (see Introduction).

[2] The Tantras are written in the form of a discussion between Ṣhiva and His spouse Pârvatî.

[3] Sound-Brahman (see Introduction).

[4] Ghor, which literally means "intense," "unadulterated," an adjective here implying the markedly (sinful) characteristics of the Kali age.

END OF PART I.



Yantra of Ṣmaṣhâna Kâlî.

PRESS NOTICES

On Mahànirvàna Tantra, "Hymns to the Goddess," and Tantrik Texts (Vols. I. and II.)

"The Tantras have hitherto played in Indology the part of a jungle which everybody is anxious to avoid. It is therefore a matter of congratulation that at last somebody has made up his mind scientifically to explore the jungle . . . That these books (including those in preparation) are likely to become a great boon, everybody will admit who knows to what an extent Medieval and Modern Hinduism are penetrated by Tantrism."—*Theosophist.*

"So far scholars have fought very shy of this Tantric and Shâkta Library and with good reason . . . The subject is one of the most difficult to disentangle. For the serious student of comparative religion, however, the Tantra is a mine of information . . . Sufficient has now been said to give the reader some slight indication of the problems and puzzles that await solution in this strange world of religious practice and experience contained in the Tantras. There are few who are in any way competent even to study the subject; much less to deal with it. Mr. Avalon is a courageous pioneer into this unknown land . . . His translation is therefore a very useful piece of work and practically opens up for us a new field of study, though perhaps the most baffling in the whole vast complex of Hindu religion. We wish him success in his labours."—*Quest.*

"Tantrik literature has been neglected by Sanskrit scholars as well as students of comparative religion . . . Mr. Arthur Avalon has devoted himself to the study of these obscure writings with an enthusiasm worthy, some would think, of other Sanskrit writings as yet untranslated. One may join in his hope that much of the prejudice against them will disappear when the Tantras are read in their entirety . . . excellent translation . . . Mr. Avalon and his collaborator deserve to be congratulated on their success in a really difficult task."—*Times of India.*

"These two valuable volumes for the first time try to present what may well be described as an inside view of a most important branch of Hindu spiritual culture, not only to the Western world but even to the so-called modern reader in Hindustan itself . . . The translators are—their apparently French pen-name notwithstanding—unmistakably English, but without the least little insularity characteristic of their race. They evidently went to the study of these uninviting books with an absolutely open mind, and have availed themselves of every help that they could get from genuine Hindu Pandits and Sâdhakas in their study and interpretation of these sacred texts. These and other volumes in preparation will throw considerable light upon an aspect of Hindu thought and culture which has so long baffled the modern intellect."—*Hindu Review.*

"These two works deal with a decadent phase of Indian religion professed by the sect of Shâktas. In the Tantras or Scriptures of this sect we find the lofty conceptions of earlier and purer beliefs often almost entirely obscured by brainless hocus pocus and debasing and sensual rites. Of such a character is the religion which the translator of this work extols and recommends to the world of the twentieth century! It appears that this Tantra is the first to be translated into English. Unfortunately the programme of similar enterprises projected by the translator deprives us of the hope that it might also prove the last."—*Athenæum.*

"To speak frankly, we believe the Tantric teachings to represent the Hindu spirit at its very worst . . . But whatever be the merit of the Tantras from a moral and intellectual point of view, there can be no doubt of their immense influence over India, and as a document of the Hindu mind—almost at its lowest, we think—this translation, made with considerable skill and furnished with useful notes, has distinct value."—*Luzac's Oriental List.*

"The present translation is the first ever published in Europe of any Indian Tantra . . . masterly translations . . . Tantra is synonymous to many with black magic pure and simple. The worship of the Divine Feminine as Devî or Shakti, however, despite the frailty of human nature, is fraught with great possibilities for ennobling and dignifying the lives of men, and the 'Hymns to the Goddess' especially . . . offer to the Devotee a fountain of mingled tenderness and splendour from which many a life-giving and inspiring draught may be quaffed. We can therefore warmly recommend these works to the open-minded occultist and mystic alike—but only to such; to all but these they will remain 'a sealed book.'"—*Occult Review.*

"On hearing that a European has translated a Tantrik treatise a feeling of disregard for his work at once comes over us; for the Tantra is not a Shâstra which reveals its true meaning except it has been studied under a Guru . . . We commenced reading the translation with misgivings. Happily, however, a perusal of it has charmed us. That the author has taken every effort and care to express the true sense of all that is contained in the original is patent in the translation of every verse. The Introduction not only reveals the learning of the author, but is also the proof that he has understood in what light Hindus regard the Tantra Shâstra . . . He commenced his work with a Hindu's heart, with a Hindu's regard, and Hindu's faith, and so his translation is what it ought to be."

Speaking of the "Texts" the same journal says: "The books have been edited with very great care. We have never before seen such a faultless edition of any Tantra. May the labours of the workers be fruitful."—*Hitabadi.*

"The lucid Introduction of this book is extremely valuable. The great principles of this Tantra which he so admirably places before the public will endure. The English rendering is faultless. The translators have shown consummate knowledge of Sanskrit in the beautiful English rendering . . . Every line of the Preface and Introduction is replete with tender sympathy for the ancient Hindu ideal. The translators have given two valuable works to the Hindu world, and we recommend them to all Hindu libraries and institutions."—*Indian Mirror.*

"In perusing the author's Introduction to the Mahânirvâna Tantra, we have been truly bewildered with astonishment. We could never have dreamt that it was possible for a modern Christian Englishman to so fully understand such matters as the mode of Tantrik Sâdhana . . . The author has learnt a great deal of the inner and secret doctrine of the Tantra. . . . It is no exaggeration to say that we have never heard, even from any Bengali Pandit, such a clear exposition of Mantra-shakti, as that which the author has given . . . We may certainly say that he could only make this impossible thing possible through inherent tendencies (Sangskâra) acquired in his previous life . . . Arthur Avalon has not spoken a single word to satisfy himself, nor tried to explain things according to his own imagination. He has only given what are true inferences, according to the principles of Shâstric reasoning . . . will create a revolution of ideas among the scholars of Europe. And if they commence to appreciate the Tantras it is probable that then the Shâstra may be held in greater respect in Bengal, the home of Tantrik Sâdhana . . . It seems as if the World-Mother had again willed it, has again

desired to manifest Her power so that Arthur Avalon is studying the Tantras and has published so beautiful a version of the Mahânirvâna."—*Sahitya.*

"These Hymns, as revealing the heart of India, are sure to be of interest to those who sympathize with real faith and heartfelt piety; with spiritual aspiration, found in whatever garb. The authors have done well in placing them before the English public." —*Indian Review.*

"The present translation (Mahânirvâna) is distinguished by its elegance and by the profound and comprehensive knowledge by which it is backed. The footnotes are all to the point, and contain many a valuable hint. The most admirable part of the book, however, is the Introduction, which contains a complete survey of the all manifold subjects treated in the book—contains much new matter, and on that account must be welcome to the general reader and the Orientalist. We heartily congratulate Mr. Avalon on the publication of this fine book, and look forward with pleasure to the books he is preparing . . . 'Hymns to the Goddess' occupies a prominent place among the documents so far published of the history of religions; for no book has yet been published in any European language which gives us such a deep insight into the mind of the Devî worshipper as this . . . The editing (of the 'texts') has been done with great care."—*Theosophist.*

"If we exclude the notes by the author we may at once say that European scholars will get in this book (Mahânirvâna) a thoroughly reliable translation of the text. The learned Introduction shows that the author has not only studied many works dealing with the so-called Tantrik doctrines, but has made himself acquainted with the Yoga systems of later times, with a good deal of care and patience. This lengthy and erudite introduction, as well as the explanatory footnotes, will rather have the effect of misleading the readers instead of helping them in understanding the simple purpose of the author of the Mahânirvâna . . . (for) the author has considered all the Tantrik works as complementary to each other. We hope that in bringing out other works on the subject of Tantra the learned and capable author will use more discretion and will exercise his critical judgment."—*Modern Review.*

"Arthur Avalon's English translation of the Mahânirvâna Tantra is destined to inaugurate a new epoch in the advancement of Oriental studies both because he has by his excellent Introduction on the Tantra opened out a new field of study and has also, in so doing, followed the orthodox interpretations without

making the least effort to inflict upon the reader, in the name of the Shâstra, ideas and aspirations which are foreign to it. This has been done in a way which discloses his deep insight into the Shâstra."—*Calcutta University Magazine.*

"Our first impression was one of amzement and delight. As all students of the Shâstras are aware, the Mahânirvâna is one of the most important of Hindu philosophical works combined with elaborate ritualism, and its translation, therefore, by a European involved certainly a prodigious amount of study, sympathy, and real understanding. Of the Introduction alone it may be said that for its lucidity, conciseness, directness, and for its depth of penetration and insight, it may by itself claim to be a standard work on the much-abused Tantras, and the author would have rendered Hinduism indebted if he had done nothing else. It is a powerful literary and philosophical production . . . an unbiassed reader will be sure to find out how ridiculously misrepresented have been the Tantrik principles and practices . . . remarkable Sanskrit scholarship and thoroughly Hinduized outlook on, and true understanding of, one of the most abstruse branches of Hindu thought. He has sustained a burning interest and vividly poetic interpretation throughout his entire work. He has succeeded in his difficult enterprise . . . recommendable to writers of rare and yet perfect translations of Hindu scriptures. The Hymns selected are some of the most imaginative and beautiful of all the songs to the Divine Mother. We have rarely come across such an illuminating exposition and a masterly vindication of the underlying ideas and principles of Devî worship."—*Prabudha Bhârata.*

"A task of no ordinary difficulty, but Mr. Avalon has performed it with remarkable success . . . His commentaries have elucidated many knotty problems; he has brought to our knowledge an immense store of information of prime importance, which has been so long hidden from us . . . the Introduction is a masterly dissertation on the subject, and furnishes proof of his familiarity with the subject, a grasp of mind, and facility of treatment which we cannot but admire . . . he has elucidated to an extent, hitherto unattempted, some of the abstrusest mysticisms and obscurities of Tantrik literature. In reading his terse and lucid explanations of the many extremely abstruse points with which Mr. Avalon deals, it is impossible to realize that the writer is dealing with a subject which is quite foreign to the sphere in which he was born. We cannot but repeat an expression of thanks for the valuable services which Mr. Avalon is rendering to Tantrik literature."—*Amrita Bazar Patrika.*

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